BEATRICE TYLDESLEY.

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BY

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BEATRICE TYLDESLEY.

Book the Fourth.

[CONTINUED.]

SIR JOHN FENWICK.

III.

MR. CULLENFORD IS BRIBED.

WHILE staying in town, Sir John Fenwick occupied a house in St. James's-square, and on the morning of Walter's detention by the king at Kensington Palace, the proud Northumbrian baronet and Lady Mary were still in the breakfast-room, when Sir George Barclay suddenly made his appearance.

He seemed very much troubled, and as soon as the footman who announced him had disappeared, he exclaimed :

"I bring you bad news, Sir John. We are betrayed."

"Betrayed!" cried Fenwick, starting to his feet with a look of dismay. "By whom?"

"That I can only surmise," replied Sir George. "But we shall all be arrested, if we don't provide for our safety."

"This is indeed frightful news, Sir George," said Lady Mary. "Is there immediate danger, think you?"

"I fear so," he replied. "I shall beat a retreat, and fly to France as soon as I can; and so will you, I suppose?" he added to Fenwick.

"Undoubtedly," replied the other. "I am always prepared for flight. I shall make my way to my house on Romney

Marsh, and embark from New Romney or Hythe for Dunkirk."

"I will go with you," said Sir George. "Fortunately, your ladyship can remain here. You will be in no danger, but the house will be watched."

"I ought to have been prepared for all this, Sir George," rejoined Lady Mary. "But I feel quite taken by surprise."

"I hope all our friends may get away safely," said Fenwick. "I shall not be able to give them notice."

"No; that is quite impossible," said Lady Mary. "Have you seen anything of Captain Crosby, Sir George?"

"Nothing whatever," he replied. "I called this morning at the inn where he lodges, but could not find him. He had

gone out early, the landlord told me. It is impossible he can have betrayed us."

"Quite impossible!" exclaimed Lady Mary. "I would answer for Captain Crosby with my life. The person I suspect of treachery is Captain Pendergrass. Look to him!"

"We have no time to look to him now," said Sir John. "We shall have enough to do to take care of ourselves. We must punish the traitor hereafter."

"Who told you that the plot had been betrayed, Sir George?" asked Lady Mary.

"Captain Charnock. Unfortunately, there is no doubt of the fact. I wish we could warn all our friends. But that is quite impossible. Some of them, I fear, will attend the meeting appointed to be held

at the 'King's Head' this evening, and in that case their arrest is certain."

"We must endeavour to prevent that, at all events," said Sir John Fenwick. "I shall never forgive myself if any are captured."

At this juncture, Sir William Perkins and Sir John Friend were introduced.

"You know that all is over with us?" cried Perkins, hurrying up to them. "The best plot ever invented has been betrayed. We shall all be beheaded."

"Take comfort, my dear friend," said Sir John Fenwick. "No death is so easy and gentlemanlike as that by the axe."

"That reflection affords me small consolation," said Sir William. "I don't want to die just yet."

"No; I hope you will escape," said Lady Mary.

"We have come here to consult about our flight," said Sir William Perkins.

"I will give you the best advice I can, Sir William," said Fenwick; "but we must all shift for ourselves. Have you plenty of money in your purse?"

"I have two or three hundred pounds about me," replied Sir William.

"And I have got quite as much," said Sir John Friend.

"Then you both ought to escape," said Sir George Barclay. "Now take my advice, for I have well considered the matter. Don't go back to your lodgings, wherever they may be, at an inn, or otherwise, but proceed at once to the river side; take a boat, pass through London Bridge, and go

on as far as you can. You can always land when it suits you. Or you may embark in some vessel bound for Harwich or Yarmouth—no matter where. Get out of London before the discovery of the plot gets abroad."

"You give good advice, Sir George, and we'll follow it," said Sir William Perkins. "Would we were now in some swift wherry, manned by a couple of active young watermen."

"Well, you'll soon be on board one," said Fenwick.

"And soon in France, I hope," added Lady Mary, earnestly.

"Again take my advice, gentlemen," said Sir George Barclay. "When you leave this house, go out by the area, and not at the front door."

"I'll see you safely out," said Sir John Fenwick.

Having bidden farewell to Lady Mary, who seemed very anxious for their departure, the two gentlemen were taken to the lower part of the house by Sir John.

A footman being sent out as a pioneer, reported that all looked safe, upon which the fugitives ventured forth, and got off without interruption.

On his return to the breakfast-room, Sir John Fenwick stated that their friends had got off safely, and added:

"An idea has just occurred to me, Sir George, which I hope won't startle you. We shall run great risk of arrest if we attempt to leave the house in the usual way. I therefore propose that we disguise ourselves as men-servants. My portly butler's

dress will just suit you, and I shall do very well as a tall footman. They can provide us both with well-powdered wigs, which will complete the disguise. What think you of the plan? Have you any objection to the masquerade?"

"None whatever," replied Sir George. "I think the plan excellent, and certain to carry us through."

"Nothing could be better," cried Lady Mary. "Pray go down stairs at once, and change dresses with Greg and Hopkins."

No time was lost in carrying the plan into execution. In less than a quarter of an hour Sir John Fenwick was metamorphosed into a very smart valet, and Sir George into a stout and most respectable-looking butler.

While this transformation was being effected, it was judged best that Hopkins and Greg should quit the house in plain clothes; and they did so, each with a good sum in his pocket.

As soon as Sir John Fenwick was ready, he went up the area steps to reconnoitre, and had scarcely shown himself when a person, who was no other than Aaron Smith's clerk, Cullenford, came up, and said:

"A word with you, friend. Is Sir John Fenwick within?"

"What do you want with him?" asked the supposed footman.

"Never mind what I want," said Cullenford. "Answer my question. Is Sir John within?"

"No, he is not," was the prompt reply.

"He went out early this morning with Sir George Barclay, and won't return before night."

"I don't believe you, sirrah," rejoined Cullenford. "I feel certain your master is within, and I'm equally certain Sir George Barclay is with him. I hold warrants for the arrest of both of them, and it is my intention to search the house. Don't suppose I am alone. I have plenty of assistance at hand."

At this juncture, Sir George Barclay made his appearance, looking exactly like a high-class butler.

"Is anything the matter, Hopkins?" he inquired.

"A great deal," replied the other. "Here is an officer with warrants for the arrest of our master and Sir George Barclay. I have

told him they are not in the house, but he won't believe me. Perhaps you can convince him."

"Bid him come in, and convince himself; that's the best plan," said Sir George in his new character. "Or shall I open the front door?"

"I'm not alone," cried Cullenford. "I've half a dozen men with me. Two will enter by the front door; two will come down this way; the others will keep watch outside. Since escape is impossible, Sir John and his friend had best deliver themselves up quietly."

"No doubt they will, when you find them," said Sir George. "But I repeat, they are not in the house."

"We shall ascertain that presently," cried Cullenford, as he came down to the pas-

sage, followed by two other men, both of whom were well armed. "Stop here," he added to them; "and allow no one, on any pretence, to leave the house."

"Are we to use our firearms, sir?" asked the men, planting themselves at the doorway, and drawing their pistols.

"In case of need, yes," replied Cullenford. "No one must leave the house without my permission."

"Will you favour me with your name, sir?" asked the supposed footman.

"Cullenford," replied the other. "Yours, I believe, is Hopkins?"

"It is, Mr. Cullenford," replied Sir John.

"And mine is Greg," said Sir George.

"Well, then, Mr. Greg, I must trouble you to take me over the house," said Cullenford.

"And I'll go on and let your men in at the front door," said Sir John, hurrying up-stairs.

In the lobby he found Lady Mary, who scarcely recognised him in disguise.

"Don't be uneasy," he whispered. "All is going on well. Cullenford, who conducts the party, insists on searching the house, but has no suspicion of the trick played upon him; and I feel confident we shall be able to outwit him. Greg and Hopkins are already gone."

"Are the other servants aware that you and Sir George have taken their places?" asked Lady Mary.

"They are," he replied, "and will lend their best assistance. Still, we must not trust them too far."

"No; I will look after them," said her ladyship.

While Sir John opened the front door, and let in all the men stationed outside, Sir George and his attendant came upstairs.

Bowing to her ladyship, Cullenford explained his business in respectful terms.

"I am told that the two gentlemen of whom I am in quest are not in the house," he said, "but I must satisfy myself on that point."

"Pray do so, sir," rejoined Lady Mary. "Perhaps you will first step in here," she added, taking him to the breakfast-room.

"Did Sir George Barclay breakfast with your ladyship, may I ask?" said Cullenford, glancing at the table.

"He arrived before breakfast was over, but took nothing," she replied.

"How long was that ago?" he inquired.

"Perhaps an hour—perhaps more; I can't exactly recollect," she rejoined.

"Your ladyship has a poor memory, I find," remarked Cullenford. "Was he expected?"

"I really cannot tell," she replied. "I rather think not."

"I think so, too," said Cullenford. "Pray, Mr. Greg," he added, to the supposed butler, who had followed them into the room, "did you see Sir George Barclay this morning?"

"I did, sir," was the reply. "And I never saw him looking more cheerful."

"Cheerful! Impossible!" cried Cullenford.

"Well, he laughed incessantly, if that's a sign of cheerfulness," said Sir George. "Your ladyship must have observed the same thing."

"I thought him very lively and agreeable," she rejoined.

"Did he tell Sir John Fenwick their plot was discovered, and they should both be arrested?" said Cullenford.

"Not that I heard," replied Lady Mary.

"Nor propose immediate flight to France?"

"He seemed as easy and unconcerned as I am at this moment, sir," remarked Sir George.

"This is extraordinary," said Cullenford; "always supposing you are telling me the truth."

"I should scorn to tell you a lie, sir!

Sir George only came to invite my master to take a walk with him in Saint James's Park."

"And Sir John assented?" asked Cullenford.

"Readily," replied the other. "You will find them there now, if you choose to look after them."

"How long have they been gone?"

"Don't answer that question, Greg," interposed Lady Mary.

"I insist upon an answer," cried Cullenford.

"Well, then, they have been gone rather more than an hour," replied Sir George. "But I should think they must be in the Park still. You would have a better chance of finding them there than here."

"You think so?" remarked Cullenford, with a wink.

"I am sure of it," replied Sir George, winking in return.

"What will you give me to act upon your suggestion, and take my men to the Park?"

"A hundred pounds," replied Sir George, without a moment's hesitation.

"But I have two warrants," remarked Cullenford, displaying them.

"Then say a hundred each," cried Sir George.

Cullenford nodded assent.

"Besides, I have half a dozen men with me," he said, "and they will all expect something."

"You shall have another fifty pounds to

divide among them," rejoined Sir George. "Will that do?"

Cullenford again nodded assent.

During the foregoing colloquy Lady Mary had quitted the room.

She now returned with Sir John, who closed the door after him as he came in, and went up quickly to the others.

"Well, is all settled?" he said.

"Ay," replied Sir George. "A bargain has just been concluded between Mr. Cullenford and myself, in which I am sure you will agree. For two hundred and fifty pounds he has consented to take away his men."

"I'm deuced glad to hear it," cried Sir John. "We'll settle the matter at once."

So the money was forthwith paid, and Mr. Cullenford seemed very well satisfied.

"You fancied you had taken me in by your disguises, gentlemen," he remarked, with a laugh. "But you were mistaken. I knew you both the moment I set eyes on you, and at once comprehended your trick."

"Had we known it was you who were coming to arrest us, Mr. Cullenford," said Sir John, "we shouldn't have given ourselves so much trouble, for we are aware you are not difficult to deal with. But it might have been some one else——"

"Who would have treated you very differently," said Cullenford. "Leave London as soon as you can. You're not safe here, and I may not always be at hand to help you. Before I remove my men I must make a pretence of searching the house. Perhaps you'll come with me, Sir John?

Your servant, Sir George. Your ladyship's most obedient."

Bowing obsequiously to Lady Mary, who regarded him with disgust, Mr. Cullenford followed Sir John out of the room.

"I'm very glad to have got rid of him," said Sir George, as soon as he was gone; "but it's fortunate for us he was sent on the errand. I must now bid your ladyship adieu. As soon as I have got rid of this disguise, I shall set off for Romney Marsh. I hope we shall meet again ere long at Saint-Germain."

"I sincerely hope so," replied her ladyship. "Farewell!"

Just then Sir John came in to say that Cullenford and his men were gone, and there being nothing now to prevent Sir

George's departure, he hastened to the butler's room, and having resumed his own attire, quitted the house, but with the utmost caution.

IV.

SIR JOHN FENWICK WARNS HIS FRIENDS.

WHEN Sir John Fenwick next presented himself to his lady, it was no longer in the character of Hopkins, the footman.

"Sir George is gone, my love," he said, "and I must follow."

"Is it quite impossible you can take me with you?" she asked, with an imploring look.

"Quite," he replied. "I may be placed

in situations in which your presence would infallibly betray me. Besides, you are in no danger, and can choose your own time for flight."

"Whatever might be the inconvenience to myself, I would go with you, if I could be of the slightest use," said Lady Mary; "but since you think I should increase your peril, I will urge you no more to take me. Never did I feel so much anxiety on your account as now. A fearful presentiment of ill weighs upon me, and I am sure I shall not be able to shake it oft till I hear you are safe in France."

"With such feelings, you are far better away," said Sir John. "You would only discourage me."

"But I would repress them," she cried.

"You could not," he rejoined. "But

there is another and more solid reason why you should remain behind. My estates are certain to be sequestered, and you may have to present a petition for me to the king."

"Ah!" she exclaimed; "you now in some measure reconcile me to the enforced separation. Oh, my dear love, if you escape your present peril, promise me solemnly you will not engage in another plot."

"I dare not make such a promise," he rejoined, "because I feel I could not keep it. I shall never be content till I am avenged on William of Orange."

"Heaven is against you. All your plans of vengeance have proved abortive, and recoil on your own head. If you pursue them further, they must end in your own

destruction. Your estates will now be forfeited. Next time you may lose your life. Oh, be warned, be warned!"

"Nothing you can say will check me," he rejoined, sternly. "I must go on to the end. But I firmly believe our next scheme will succeed."

"You are like a desperate gamester," said her ladyship. "You persuade yourself that fortune will favour you at the last. But I have no such belief. King James's cause is my cause, but I cannot conceal from myself that it is unlucky. How many loyal gentlemen will now die like traitors!"

"Their fate pains me to the soul," cried Sir John. "I must make an effort to save them."

"What can you do?" she demanded.

"I can warn them not to attend the proposed meeting to-night, but to fly," he rejoined.

"You will not aid them, and will greatly add to your own danger," she urged. "Save yourself."

"But I shall for ever reproach myself if I abandon them. It is the part of a coward to desert friends in the hour of danger."

"Do not fear. Already the discovery of the plot has been noised abroad. They must have heard of it."

"At any rate, I am resolved to go to our place of rendezvous. Perhaps I shall find Walter Crosby there. His conduct is inexplicable, and inconsistent with the high notion I had formed of him."

"But think not he has betrayed you,"

said her ladyship. "I am certain it is not so."

"No; I fully acquit him of any such act," said Sir John. "But I must tarry here no longer. Farewell, my best beloved!" he added, tenderly embracing her. "May Heaven watch over you and protect you, and may we speedily meet again under happier circumstances!"

She sustained herself by a great effort, but her utterance was choked by emotion, and only a sob burst from her.

Again straining her to his breast, again bidding her farewell, Sir John rushed out of the room.

Disregarding the great additional risk he should incur, Sir John Fenwick was resolved to visit the meeting-house of the

conspirators before quitting London; and he therefore descended the Thames in a wherry to London Bridge, and then landing, mounted Fish-street-hill, and proceeded along Gracechurch-street to Leadenhall-street.

As far as external appearances went, everything seemed going on as usual at the "King's Head;" but on entering the house, Sir John perceived in a moment from the aspect of the landlord, Mr. Baldwin, that he was aware the plot was discovered.

"This is a bad job, Sir John," said Baldwin, "a very bad job, and I fear will cause great mischief."

"That's certain, Baldwin," replied Fenwick. "I came here to give you warning, but I find you are already prepared."

"I received notice of the discovery about

two hours ago, by a messenger from Sir George Barclay," replied Baldwin. "You are aware that several of King James's guard at Saint-Germain, who came over here with Sir George, are lodging in the house. He sent a message to them, together with a sufficient sum of money for their expenses, directing them to return to France as expeditiously as possible."

"Are they gone?"

"Not yet, Sir John."

"I hope they won't have reason to repent their negligence," cried Fenwick.

"Father Johnson and three or four others connected with the Jacobite Club are likewise staying here," said Baldwin.

"And they are here still?"

"They are, Sir John."

"What inconceivable folly!"

"None of them seem afraid. We have had so many false alarms, that they won't believe they are in danger now."

"They'll find it out to their cost, Baldwin. However, my main object in coming here is to get you to warn all the members of the club, and prevent them from coming here to-night."

"Lord bless you, Sir John, I don't know where a third of them are to be found; but I'll do my best. Ha! what's this?" he added, looking out of the door. "There's a party of grenadiers evidently coming to the house. You mustn't attempt to go out, or you'll be captured. Go to the back of the house. There's a safe exit from the yard."

Catching a glimpse of the grenadiers,

Sir John hastily retreated to the ante-room of the large apartment in which the previous meeting had been held.

Here he found some eight or ten of the guard brought over by Sir George Barclay, together with Father Johnson, Captain Charnock, Captain Porter, and Captain Gill.

"The enemy is upon us!" he cried. A party of grenadiers have just entered the house."

"We must retreat into the large room," cried Charnock, "and defend ourselves. Come with me, my men."

The French guard instantly snatched up their muskets, which were reared against the wall, and as soon as all present had passed into the inner room, the door was locked and bolted.

"Is it a strong party, Sir John?" asked Charnock.

"Not more than a dozen men, I should think," he rejoined. "I shouldn't be afraid to attack them; but if we drove them back, we could not issue forth into the street without certainty of capture."

"But there is a private staircase which leads to the yard, and thence to a back lane, by which we can escape," cried Father Johnson. "I shall avail myself of it. Let those who will, come with me."

With this, he passed out by a narrow door at the farther end of the room, but no one followed him.

For a few minutes all remained quiet, but at the end of that time three or four loud knocks were heard, evidently delivered

with the butt-end of a musket against the door.

"Let us in at once," cried an authoritative voice, "or we shall force our way in."

"Who are you?" demanded Sir John.

"We belong to his majesty's grenadiers," replied the officer who had spoken. "We know you to be rebels and traitors. Again I command you to open the door, or take the consequences."

A derisive laugh from the French guard followed.

Provoked by this defiance, the officer outside ordered his men to burst open the door; but they had no sooner commenced their work than half a dozen muskets were discharged, and, in two or three instances,

the bullets passed through the boards, and drove back the intruders.

However, the grenadiers were determined to force an entrance, and after another summons, to which no answer whatever was returned, they broke down the door, and came in.

The room was empty.

V.

THE FLIGHT TO ROMNEY MARSH.

ON escaping at the rear of the "Queen's Head," Sir John Fenwick gave some hasty instructions to the French guardsmen, and said a few words to Captain Charnock; after which he separated himself from the party, thinking he would be safer alone, and crossing London Bridge, proceeded along the High-street in the Borough, until he came to the "Tabard."

In the court-yard of this ancient and renowned hostel, which still preserved most of its original character, he found Captain Charnock, and almost immediately afterwards the guardsmen arrived.

Ordering the latter to go into the house and keep as quiet as possible, he took Captain Charnock to the stables, where they could converse without attracting attention, and said to him:

"I think you are aware that I have an old house, called Hurst Place, in Romney Marsh, not far from the coast, and am able, therefore, almost at any time, to embark for Dunkirk or Calais, as I am sure to find a vessel either at New Romney or Hythe."

"I am quite aware of it, Sir John," replied Charnock. "Though I myself have

never been at Hurst Place, several of my friends have, and it has often been described to me."

"You shall go with me now, if you like," said Fenwick.

"It is very kind of you to take me, Sir John," rejoined Charnock. "I hope I sha'n't add to your risk."

"No; you won't do that," said Sir John. "I keep half a dozen horses here, and I can furnish you with one."

Charnock again thanked him, and gratefully accepted the offer.

"I propose to take a couple of these French guards with me," said Sir John. "It would be dangerous, I think, to take them all."

"You judge rightly," observed Char-

nock. "Such a troop could not fail to attract notice, and might cause stoppage and pursuit."

At this moment a groom presented himself. His dress showed that he was a private servant.

"Has Sir George Barclay been here, Webber?" inquired Fenwick.

"Two hours ago, Sir John," replied the groom. "He must be half-way to Appledore by this time."

"I am glad to hear it," replied Fenwick. "I shall follow him without loss of time. Horses will be required for Captain Charnock and myself, and I shall have two French guardsmen with me."

"Will they require horses, Sir John?" asked Webber.

"They will. There are ten of them in the house, but the others will come on later."

"Must I stay and look after them, Sir John?"

"You must. And I hope you'll bring them safely to the Marsh.

"I'll try. Do you expect me there to-night?"

"Certainly. And now get the horses ready. I want to be off."

Sir John's orders were quickly obeyed. Assisted by an under-groom, Webber soon had four good strong horses saddled and bridled.

Meantime, a couple of guardsmen had been selected, and accompanied by Captain Charnock and his escort, Sir John now started on his journey.

In less than two hours, the party, who rode quickly all the way from London, and made few and short stoppages, arrived at Appledore.

VI.

HURST PLACE.

SIR JOHN FENWICK and his party were now on the borders of the extensive Marsh, lying on this side of the Kentish coast; and Captain Charnock and the French guards, who had never beheld it before, were much struck by its appearance.

An eminence which they mounted enabled them to survey the whole of the region almost as far as Dymchurch on

the one hand, and New Romney on the other.

Intersected by numberless dykes and watercourses, fed by the River Rother, which flows through the vast flat plain, and is shut in by walls and banks to prevent inundation, totally destitute of timber, the whole district had a strange, solitary look—especially at the hour when it was now viewed.

A few antique churches, of small size, could be distinguished scattered about the plain, with here and there a little village consisting of a dozen cottages, and a larger habitation, something between a mansion and a farm-house.

But the general aspect of the Marsh was gloomy and unfrequented, although it was covered with cattle and sheep, and con-

stantly frequented by sea-birds, that filled the air with their cries.

"What think you of Romney Marsh?" remarked Sir John to Captain Charnock.

"'Tis a striking-looking place. But I should not like to be condemned to live in it altogether," replied the other.

"I do not dislike its solitary character," observed Sir John; "and dull and melancholy as I dare say it will seem to you, I am very fond of Hurst Place."

"Is the house visible from this spot?" asked Charnock.

"I can point out its position, but not the house itself," replied Fenwick. "It is about five miles off, and lies in the direction of New Romney. We must push on, or we shall have darkness upon us ere we get there."

"With all my heart," replied Charnock. "I shall not be sorry to end my journey."

Putting spurs to their wearied steeds, they rode along a sort of causeway that took them across the Marsh.

The gloom of evening was now rapidly advancing, but there was still sufficient light to enable them to look around.

The sombre and melancholy character of the Marsh began to increase, and the various objects that could be discerned seemed to assume fantastic shapes. Captain Charnock, who was as free from superstitious terrors as most men, declared he had never felt such extraordinary sensations before.

"I should think evil spirits must be abroad," he said, pointing to some lights in the distance.

"Those lights are merely fen-fires," remarked Sir John.

Darker and darker it grew as they went on, and the Marsh would have looked quite black and dismal but for the gleaming of the watercourses.

At length, after making several turnings, and following an unfrequented road, they came to a large, solitary structure.

Even in the gloom it could be perceived that it was an old house with large chimneys and gables, surrounded by a wide moat, crossed by a wooden bridge.

The house might have been uninhabited, since not a light issued from its casements, and all seemed silent within.

"At length we have reached our journey's end," cried Sir John. "This is Hurst Place."

Though the house did not promise a very cheerful welcome, Captain Charnock was right glad to hear the announcement.

While crossing the drawbridge, Sir John took a whistle from his pocket, and blew it loudly.

In answer to the summons, the door was thrown open, and a man-servant could be discovered with a light. Two grooms were likewise seen hurrying from the stables, one of whom bore a lighted lantern.

"Is any one here, Geoffrey," cried Sir John, as he rode up to the door.

"Yes, I am, Sir John," cried the well-known voice of Sir George Barclay from the passage. "I got here about two hours ago, and am right glad to find you have arrived safely. Who have you with you?"

"Captain Charnock."

"Yes, I am here, Sir George, safe and sound," cried the person in question.

And, as soon as the new-comers had dismounted, a joyful meeting took place in the passage.

After giving all necessary orders respecting the horses, Sir John Fenwick took Captain Charnock to the dining-room, in which Sir George Barclay had previously been seated. Here some fried ham and eggs were quickly served by Geoffrey, on which the two gentlemen made a hearty supper, with the aid of a flask of excellent claret.

Having thus made themselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit, the party began to discuss their plans of flight.

"We are fortunate in regard to boats," remarked Sir George Barclay. "There are no less than three sloops at New Romney, any of which will take us to Dunkirk or Calais whenever we give the order. I know not what your intentions may be, gentlemen, but for my own part I shall be off as soon as I can. I have sent word that I shall sail at an early hour to-morrow morning, and shall come on board to-night. I recommend you to go with me."

"That is rather too expeditious for me," said Sir John. "I shall not start till the following morning. I don't think there is any danger."

"Still, it would be prudent to start at once," urged Sir George. "Something unforeseen may happen."

"I have no fear," replied Sir John. "Leave those two French guards with me, and I will bring over the whole party if the others arrive in time—if not, I will make arrangements for their transport."

Sir George readily agreed to this proposition, and then asked Captain Charnock whether he meant to go with him.

"No; I shall wait for Sir John," replied Charnock. "I'm in no hurry."

An hour later, having fortified himself with a glass of usquebaugh, Sir George Barclay set out for New Romney under the guidance of a groom, and safely embarked in one of the sloops he had mentioned.

Sir John and Captain Charnock had good reason to regret that they did not depart at the same time.

During the night Webber arrived with Father Johnson and the remainder of the French guards, so that they now formed a tolerably large party.

Seen by daylight, Hurst Place proved a very curious old house. Built almost entirely of oak, and roofed with shingles, it was in very good preservation, and though hoary with age, looked as if it would last for a couple more centuries.

The broad moat was fed by the Rother, and crossed by a drawbridge; and, if required, a boat could be taken to the river.

The situation of the house was perfectly solitary. Not another habitation was within a mile of it—not a tree, except a stunted holly. The unmistakable antiquity of the place, which clearly dated

back to the time of Edward IV., delighted Father Johnson, and he would gladly have tarried there for a month, and familiarised himself with the wild scenery of the Marsh, but this was out of the question.

In the course of the morning Sir John road over to New Romney for the purpose of hiring a sloop. He was accompanied by Captain Charnock and Father Johnson, but took none of the French guards with him, and only one servant, Webber.

As one of the Cinque Ports, New Romney was a place of some importance, having superseded Romney itself at the time when the course of the Rother was changed from the older port by a violent storm. Several ships were in the harbour at the time, but Sir John contented himself with looking at them from afar, and sent Webber to hire a

sloop, and arrange that it should be ready to sail before midnight.

While Webber was thus employed, the others occupied the time by visiting St. Nicholas's Church; and when the active servant returned, the whole party rode back to Hurst Place, quite unaware that they were followed at a cautious distance by Captain Bridges and his Dutch dragoons.

No doubt Bridges could have arrested Sir John and his companions without difficulty in the town, but he preferred having the affair entirely in his own hands, rightly considering it would be more profitable.

When the party were within a hundred yards of Hurst Place, Charnock happened to look back, and was greatly alarmed by

perceiving a troop of horse coming towards them at a rapid pace.

"We are pursued!" he exclaimed.

"'Tis Bridges and his Dutch dragoons! I am certain of it!" cried Father Johnson.

On this, they all dashed across the moat as quickly as they could.

"Raise the drawbridge instantly," cried Sir John to Webber, "and bring out the French guards."

By the time these orders were obeyed, and the French guards had come forth, armed with their muskets, Bridges was close at hand.

He was evidently not aware that any defensive preparations had been made, and halted about twenty yards off.

"I have you now, Sir John!" he shouted.

"I summon you to surrender in the king's name! You cannot escape!"

"You think so!" cried Fenwick. "I am of a different opinion. At any rate, I do not mean to surrender as long as I can hold my own. Before we proceed further, I should like to have a few words with you. Perhaps you will come to the edge of the moat that we may confer together."

"Pledge me your word as a gentleman that no harm is intended me," said Bridges.

This assurance being given, they both rode down to the side of the moat.

"I think we shall very quickly understand each other, Captain Bridges," said Fenwick. "I know you to be a man of shrewdness and sense, with whom it is unnecessary to waste words. Cannot we make an arrangement?"

"To speak plainly, I should be very glad to do so, Sir John," replied Bridges. "But I don't see how it can be accomplished."

"Oh, yes; there will be no difficulty, if we can only agree upon terms," said Fenwick.

"In such a case as this, you must pay well, Sir John," said Bridges, lowering his voice.

"I am quite prepared to do so," replied Fenwick, in the same tone. "But all who are with me here must be included in the bargain."

"I shall not object to that," said Bridges, "except in the case of Sir George Barclay."

"Sir George Barclay is gone," said Fenwick, "so there need be no question about him."

"Well, we can settle the terms in the

house, for I must come in," said Bridges. "Your departure must take place at night, and look like an escape."

"That plan will suit me perfectly," rejoined Sir John, "provided we can carry it out."

"Leave me to manage it," said Bridges. "You may rely upon it, I will get you all off; but I must keep up appearances with my men."

"Yes, I quite comprehend that," said Sir John. "We had better talk no further here. Lower the drawbridge," he shouted to his men.

This was done; but no sooner had the dragoons crossed the moat, than the drawbridge was again raised, so that no one who had entered the place could leave it.

Not till an explanation had been given

by Sir John Fenwick to his friends could they understand the object of this proceeding; and then Captain Charnock counselled Sir John to pay nothing to Bridges till he was quite certain of being set free by that crafty officer.

"I suspect him of some design," he said. "By this arrangement we have become his prisoners, and as he has more than double our force, he can keep us here if he thinks proper."

"You take an erroneous view of the matter," said Sir John. "I know him to be open to a bribe. Depend upon it, he won't throw away a thousand pounds."

Shortly afterwards, Captain Bridges entered the room, and those who regarded him augured ill from the expression of his countenance.

Addressing himself to Fenwick, he said, "I very much regret to tell you, Sir John, that it will be absolutely impossible for me to allow you and your friends to escape as proposed."

"Why not, sir?" demanded Fenwick, angrily. "Is it a question of amount? If so, state the sum you require, and I will try to meet you."

"You are mistaken, Sir John," said Bridges. "I would willingly let you and your friends go for a thousand pounds, but you would gain nothing, and would only fall into a trap. I have just learnt from Lieutenant Clayton, of my regiment, that orders have been given to arrest you all when you come on board that sloop at New Romney to-night."

"'Sdeath! that is unlucky!" cried Sir

John, while like exclamations arose from the others.

"Sir George Barclay's escape last night," pursued Bridges, "which has just been discovered, has roused the zeal of the officers of the port, and they are determined not to be tricked a second time. You may depend upon it, if you are seen there to-night, you will be apprehended, and will be far worse off than here."

"Now it is too late, I see it all!" cried Fenwick. "I was mad to stop here, I ought to have gone last night with Sir George Barclay."

"Yes; you would have done better," said Bridges. "The alarm has been given, and every vessel sailing from New Romney and Hythe will be searched. Besides, officers will certainly be sent here, so that,

with every desire to serve you, I shall be quite unable to do so."

"I thank you for the good feeling you display towards me, Captain Bridges," said Sir John; "but you won't blame me if I still make an effort to escape?"

"The effort will be quite useless, Sir John," remarked Bridges.

"You forget that we have a dozen of the French guard with us," said Charnock.

"No; they are already secured," rejoined Bridges.

"Secured?" cried Sir John.

"Yes; I thought it best to prevent any attempt of this kind, which could only lead to mischief," said Bridges. "I therefore caused them to be arrested and disarmed, and they are now shut up in an out-building, and guarded."

"Then it is plain no help can be had from them," said Father Johnson. "We must resign ourselves to our fate."

"Let me ask you one question, Captain Bridges," said Sir John. "Will you allow me to write to my wife, Lady Mary Fenwick, and acquaint her with my arrest? I propose to send the letter by my faithful servant, Webber, who is now here, as I am certain he will lose no time on the journey, and it is highly important that her ladyship should receive early information of my arrest, in order that she may present a petition to his majesty in behalf of myself and those with me."

"I don't know whether I shall be authorised in doing this, Sir John; but I will run the risk," replied Captain Bridges.

"If you will prepare the letter to Lady Mary, Webber shall convey it to her."

Warmly thanking him for his obliging compliance with the request, Sir John withdrew, taking Father Johnson with him, in order to consult the good priest while the letter was written.

Had Sir John followed Father Johnson's advice, he would have written a very guarded letter indeed, which would have revealed nothing in the event of seizure, and could scarcely have compromised any of the parties. But the impetuous baronet wrote a great deal too much, and while telling his lady what had happened, and urging her to spare no exertions in his behalf to obtain, if possible, an immediate interview of the king, he made what amounted to a confession of guilt.

Father Johnson endeavoured to dissuade him from sending this ill-judged despatch, but he persisted.

The letter was committed by its writer to Webber in the presence of Captain Bridges, who provided the messenger with a good horse, and allowed him at once to depart.

Webber did not proceed far on his journey. He was stopped at Appledore, and the letter taken from him, and sent on at once by another messenger to the Earl of Shrewsbury, principal Secretary of State.

VII.

LADY FENWICK HAS AN INTERVIEW WITH KING WILLIAM AT KENSINGTON PALACE.

THOUGH Sir John's letter was taken from him, Webber was neither detained nor deprived of his horse, and being well supplied with money, he proceeded on his journey as if nothing had happened.

Arriving in town about nine o'clock in the morning, he went at once to the house in Saint James's-square, and soon obtained an interview with Lady Mary.

The moment her ladyship beheld him, she perceived that he brought bad news, but her anxiety greatly increased when she learnt that her husband's letter had been intercepted, and was now no doubt in the hands of the Earl of Shrewsbury.

"I am afraid that letter will do great mischief, my lady," said Webber. "From some observations made in my hearing by Father Johnson, I am certain Sir John said more than he ought to have done; but I know that he prayed you to make every exertion in his behalf, and, above all, to see his majesty without delay."

"Oh, why did he write? Why not send a message by you, Webber?"

"That would have been far better, my lady. But I suspect Captain Bridges induced him to write, and then caused me to

be stopped at Appledore, the letter taken from me, and sent on to the Earl of Shrewsbury. I trust your ladyship will be able to obtain an early interview of his majesty."

"I shall go to Kensington Palace for that purpose this morning," she replied. "Order the carriage at once. In ten minutes I shall be ready."

Webber gladly obeyed the order. The carriage was quickly brought round, and her ladyship stepped into it, and was driven to Kensington Palace. She was attended by Webber, in place of a footman.

On her arrival at the principal entrance in the base-court, an usher immediately came forward, and was met by Webber, who informed him it was Lady Mary Fenwick, and explained the object of her visit to the palace.

From the usher's grave manner it was evident he was aware of Sir John Fenwick's arrest, and without replying to what Webber said to him, he advanced to the carriage to speak to Lady Mary.

"The Earl of Shrewsbury is now in the king's cabinet," he said, "and I cannot, therefore, ascertain at present whether his majesty will grant your ladyship an audience. But if you choose to alight, I will conduct you to a room, and as soon as I am able I will inform you of his majesty's pleasure."

Lady Mary Fenwick thanked him, and immediately alighting, was conducted up the great staircase to the first of the suite of large apartments, where the usher bowed, and left her.

Not long afterwards, when she had in

some degree regained her composure, a door opened, and, to her great surprise, and, it must be added, to her great disappointment, Walter Crosby entered the room.

Fancying it was the king, she had risen to receive his majesty.

"I see your ladyship is surprised to find me here," said Walter, as he came up, "and may naturally imagine I have deserted my cause; but I am a prisoner on parole, and must remain till the king allows me to depart."

"I would my husband were as fortunate," said Lady Mary; "but unless the king pardons him, his life, I fear, will be forfeited."

"I will not keep your ladyship in any suspense," said Walter. "Sir John's life is

in his own hands. If he chooses to make certain revelations, he will receive a conditional pardon from the king—not otherwise."

"You mean he will receive a pardon if he betrays his friends. I thought you had known my husband better. He would never purchase life on such dishonourable terms. But there is nothing more to reveal. All the conspirators are known."

"Such is not his majesty's opinion," rejoined Walter. "The king believes that several important persons, known only to Sir John Fenwick, have been engaged in this plot, and in others of a similar character, and he requires them to be delivered up to justice."

"I will not insult Sir John Fenwick by

making any such proposition to him," said Lady Mary, proudly.

"Am I to return that answer to his majesty?" asked Walter.

"I was not aware you were employed to interrogate me," observed Lady Mary. "I wish you a better office!"

"My desire is to serve your ladyship and your husband, and I trust I may be able to do so," said Walter. "I therefore deem it right to tell you plainly that your husband will only preserve his life on certain terms."

"Terms he cannot accept!" cried her ladyship.

"But he ought to consider them, methinks," observed Walter.

"It is unnecessary."

"Does your ladyship mean to reject them for him?"

"Absolutely!"

"Would it not be best to feign to accede to them, in order to gain time?" said Walter. "Such, I believe, is the course Sir John himself would pursue. But if your ladyship thinks differently, I see no reason why you should seek an audience that can lead to nothing."

Just at this moment, the folding doors communicating with the adjoining apartment were thrown open, and the king came in, accompanied by the Earl of Shrewsbury.

William had not taken many steps in the room, when he stopped and looked fixedly at Lady Mary Fenwick, who bent deeply before him.

But as her ladyship said nothing when she arose, he turned to Walter as if for an explanation, and said somewhat sharply:

"What does Lady Mary Fenwick want?"

"Her ladyship is come to solicit her husband's pardon from your majesty," replied Walter.

"Have you explained to her the sole conditions on which his life will be spared?"

"I have, sire," replied Walter. "And her ladyship feels confident that Sir John will comply with your majesty's demand."

So astounded was Lady Mary by this assertion, that she could not interpose.

"I am glad to hear it," said William. "His fate rests with himself. All his chief accomplices must be laid before me."

"My husband shall learn your majesty's commands," said Lady Mary. "I understand he has written to me, but I have not received the letter."

"The letter is here," said the Earl of Shrewsbury, producing it.

"And proves his guilt!" cried the king.

"Oh, sire, I hope not!" exclaimed Lady Mary.

"Read it to her, my lord," said the king to the Earl of Shrewsbury, who at once complied with the injunction, addressing the Lady Mary, and reading the letter very slowly:

"What I feared has happened. Had I not risked my life to save others, I should now be safe. It is the will of Heaven, and I must submit. I see nothing that can save

me, unless Lord Carlisle, in conjunction with the rest of the house of Howard, will solicit my pardon; engaging on my part that I shall quit the three kingdoms during his majesty's life, and never bear arms against him in future. You will supply the rest."

"Oh, no more! no more!" cried Lady Mary. "I pray your majesty to spare me this torture!"

William immediately signed to the Earl of Shrewsbury to stop.

"Your ladyship must have heard enough to convince you that this letter from your husband amounts to a full confession of guilt," observed the king.

"Alas! I cannot deny it!" she cried, in a voice of anguish. "But, at the same

time, it proves his repentance and desire to submit to your majesty."

"It is possible he may yet obtain a pardon," said the king. "You must see him, and tell him so."

"I will see him without delay, sire," she rejoined. "But I shall have to travel down to Romney Marsh."

"Your ladyship will find him in the Tower," said the Earl of Shrewsbury. "He was brought there this morning by Captain Bridges."

"Let her have an order to see her husband," said the king.

Then turning to Walter, he added, "You shall conduct her ladyship to the Tower. But you must return here."

"I understand, sire," replied Walter.

"If you have aught further to communicate to me, madam, I will see you again," said the king to Lady Mary.

And without waiting for any response, he quitted the apartment with the Earl of Shrewsbury.

Shortly afterwards the usher appeared with an order to Major Wentworth, Deputy Lieutenant of the Tower, which he delivered to Walter, saying:

"This will procure her ladyship and yourself admittance to Sir John Fenwick."

Both thanked him, and he then conducted them to the carriage, which was waiting in the base-court.

No explanations were given at the time to Webber, but when he was ordered to

proceed to Scotland Yard, and hire a covered boat to take them to the Tower, he immediately comprehended that Sir John was a prisoner there.

VIII.

HOW KING WILLIAM VISITED SIR JOHN FENWICK IN THE BEAUCHAMP TOWER.

In less than an hour the unhappy lady and her companion had reached the gloomy fortress, and passed through its two gateways, at the second of which Webber was detained, and ordered to remain in the guard-room till his mistress's return.

Lady Mary had often visited the Tower before, but it had never appeared to her so formidable as now. The two great gate-

ways, surmounted by towers, and flanked with bastions, quite terrified her, though she was by no means of a timid nature, and she was obliged to seek support from Walter.

But she somewhat recovered when she entered the inner ward, and proceeded towards the Lieutenant's house under the escort of a warder, who informed her that Sir John Fenwick was confined in the Beauchamp Tower—the best state prison, he added, in the fortress.

Lord Lucas, then Governor of the Tower of London, was absent, but his place was filled by Major Wentworth, the Deputy Governor, who resided at the Lieutenant's lodgings in the inner ward, and to whom Lord Shrewsbury's order was delivered by the warder.

On receiving it, Major Wentworth, a man of fine presence, and in full uniform, immediately came forth into the ante-chamber, where he found Lady Mary and Captain Crosby, and bowing to them, proffered his services with great politeness and apparent friendliness.

"Sir John," he said, "as perhaps your ladyship may be aware, is confined in the Beauchamp Tower, which is close at hand. I will conduct you to him at once; or if you wish him to be prepared for the visit, the warder shall inform him that your ladyship is here with Captain Crosby."

"Let there be no needless delay, I entreat you, sir!" she cried. "I am all impatience to behold my husband."

Thus urged, Major Wentworth said no more, but begging her and Walter to follow

him, led them to a gloomy stone structure, the narrow grated windows of which looked out upon the huge keep towering in front of it.

Just within the arched entrance of the Beauchamp Tower, which was usually secured by a strong door, clamped with iron, and studded with flat-headed nails, stood a surly-looking individual in a dark grey dress, and holding a bunch of keys in his hand.

This was John Moody, the gaoler.

Having seen Lady Fenwick and Walter go into the Lieutenant's house, and then reappear with Major Wentworth, Moody had no doubt her ladyship was coming to visit her husband, and was therefore quite prepared for the order to unlock Sir John's room.

Very considerately, Major Wentworth quitted Lady Mary at the doorway, after again assuring her that if he could contribute in any way to her husband's comfort, he should be glad to do so. Followed by Walter, she then ascended the circular stone staircase leading to her husband's prison-chamber.

By the time she reached it, the door was thrown open, and she instantly rushed in. Sir John was seated at a table, but started to his feet, and clasped her in his arms. For some moments she continued locked in his embrace.

Not to intrude upon the meeting, Walter remained outside with the gaoler.

Lady Mary was the first to speak.

"Alas! alas! is it thus we meet again?" she exclaimed. "I have always been afraid

that some misfortune would befall you. But I was not prepared for this dire calamity."

"The letter I sent you by Webber would explain all!" cried Sir John. "Have you received it?"

"I have heard a portion of it read," she replied.

"How mean you?" he cried, regarding her anxiously.

"The letter was intercepted, and taken to the Earl of Shrewsbury, by whom it was shown to the king," she rejoined.

"Great Heavens!" he exclaimed, in a despairing voice. "Then my fate is sealed!"

"No," she replied. "You may still obtain a pardon if you will."

"On what conditions?" he cried.

"By betraying all those concerned in the plot," she replied, lowering her voice to a whisper. "I have received a promise to this effect from the king himself."

"From William of Orange?" he exclaimed. "Have you seen him?"

"I have just quitted him," she rejoined, in the same low voice as before. "Webber came to Saint James's-square early this morning to tell me of your arrest and the loss of the letter entrusted to him. He likewise told me you desired me to solicit your pardon from the king. On this I went to the Kensington Palace, and saw his majesty and Lord Shrewsbury, and the king intimated plainly enough that your life would be spared on the terms I have just mentioned."

"I would rather die than accept them," cried Sir John.

"I knew it," she rejoined, "and I therefore rejected the proposition as dishonouring to you."

"You did right," said her husband.

"His majesty, however, was not satisfied, but sent me to the Tower to see you, and ordered Walter Crosby to accompany me."

"Is Walter Crosby here?" cried Sir John.

"He is," said that personage, stepping into the prison-chamber, and shutting the heavy door after him.

"How is it that I find you in the employ of the Prince of Orange?" demanded Sir John, sternly.

"You must be content to wait for an explanation," was the reply. "But, meantime, understand that my safety has not been purchased by disclosures."

"Captain Crosby would fain have you listen to the king's proposals," observed Lady Mary.

"I would have you seem to listen to them, Sir John," said Walter, significantly. "Your great object at this perilous juncture is to gain time, and enable your many powerful friends to intercede for you; but if you at once reject his majesty's offer, this will be impossible. In my opinion, you will be fully justified in pursuing this course, and I therefore recommend it to you."

"I will reflect upon what you say," re-

joined Sir John. "But the plan is extremely distasteful to me."

"And equally so to me," exclaimed Lady Mary.

"But if it enables you to escape, you may not object to it," said Walter. "What has happened to Captain Charnock and Father Johnson?"

"Both are in Newgate," replied Sir John; "and I ought to be thankful that I have been spared that indignity. Had I been sent to that felon's prison I should have died; whereas, here—in this chamber—where so many illustrious persons have been confined, and where the stone walls bear so many records of them, I feel at home, and if I am taken to the block I shall not repine."

Just then, the door was suddenly opened by Major Wentworth, who, to the great surprise of all present, announced the king; and, with the words, his majesty entered the chamber, followed by the Earl of Shrewsbury.

On the king's entrance, Major Wentworth closed the door, and remained standing before it during the whole of the royal visit.

Having advanced a few steps into the room, William stood still, and Sir John, who at first had been greatly confused, threw himself at his majesty's feet.

"Pardon, sire!" he cried. "I know I have greatly offended; but knowing, also, your majesty's clemency, I trust to obtain your forgiveness."

"Rise, sir," said William, sternly. "I

can make no promises. I have come here to question you myself, that I may judge of your sincerity. Answer or not as you think proper."

"I will answer truthfully any question your majesty may put to me," replied Sir John.

"Then tell me," said the king, "were these plots of which I have recently heard so much — were they seriously intended against my life?"

"They were, sire," replied Sir John, disregarding the cautionary looks addressed to him by his wife and Walter Crosby.

"You would have me believe, then," said William, "that there are a large number of my subjects, for whom I have done much, who seek my destruction?"

"There are many who conceive them-

selves aggrieved, my liege," replied Sir John—"many who are discontented for various causes, and all these are dangerous."

"Are you disposed to turn evidence?" demanded William.

"Before answering that question, my liege," replied Sir John, "I must understand what I shall gain by so doing."

"A clear and full confession will procure your pardon," replied the king.

"A full confession would involve so many, that I dare not promise to make it," replied Sir John. "I must have time for consideration."

"You would have me understand that all Jacobites are conspirators?" said William.

"My liege, it must naturally be so," replied Sir John. "Some are quiet—others

active. The first may be trusted—the latter are dangerous. Again, the Jacobites are divided into two parties, known as Compounders and Non-compounders."

"I never heard those names before," observed the king. "Give me an explanation."

"Am I to speak freely, sire?"

"Certainly."

"Then your majesty must know that the Compounders, who are headed by the Earl of Middleton, insist upon receiving security from the ex-king, in the event of his restoration, that the religion and liberties of the country shall be preserved; whereas, the Non-compounders, headed by Lord Melfort, are willing to bring him in unconditionally."

"Ah! now I know the meaning of the

terms," said the king. "And these parties do not act together?"

"Not ordinarily, my liege."

"To which do you belong?" asked the king.

"I am a Non-compounder, sire," replied Sir John.

"I thought as much," said William. "But there must be an end to this state of things. Both parties are equally objectionable to me. Both parties must be put down. There must be no more Jacobites in the kingdom."

"It will be well for the tranquillity of the kingdom if that can be accomplished, my liege," said Walter. "But I fear it is impossible."

"Impossible or not, it must be done," said William. "I am never alarmed by

difficulties. In two years' time there shall not be a Jacobite in England."

"If your majesty accomplishes that, I shall say you have indeed performed a miracle," observed Lord Shrewsbury.

"You can aid in this scheme, Sir John, if you will," said the king to him. "But you must go to work heartily. You have gained nothing by continuing a Jacobite."

"That is true, my liege," he replied; "but, at the same time, I have lost nothing."

"Well, you must make up your mind quickly. Let me have your answer in three days. Lady Mary Fenwick can visit you as often as she pleases during the interval. Captain Crosby can likewise come here, if he will."

"My liege, I was about to solicit a favour from you," said Walter.

"What is it?" asked the king.

"Permission to go to France without delay."

"Why do you want to go so quickly?" demanded the king.

"Because if I do not go now, sire, I may never again behold one whom I love better than life."

"Beatrice Tyldesley?"

"It is, my liege. But may I venture to ask how your majesty has heard of her?"

"No matter!" rejoined William. "You may go. But you cannot return. And you will make a greater sacrifice than you suppose."

"I cannot help it, my liege," said Walter. "I *must* go."

"Be it so," rejoined the king.

At a sign from his majesty, the door was thrown open by Major Wentworth, and the king quitted the prison-chamber with Lord Shrewsbury.

IX.

ONCE MORE AT SAINT-GERMAIN.

WALTER'S first inquiries, on arriving at the château of Saint-Germain, after a very hurried journey, were about Beatrice, and it was an immense relief to him to learn that she was out of danger. The fever had subsided, and in a few days, it was hoped, she would be sufficiently recovered to re-appear. As he had feared he should never behold her again, he could easily reconcile himself to this delay.

Colonel Tyldesley was now an inmate of the palace, and as soon as Walter had satisfied himself in regard to Beatrice, he proceeded to the worthy gentleman's apartments, which were in a distant part of the building.

The colonel was alone, and on Walter's appearance sprang from his seat, and embraced him as if he had been a brother.

"Since I see you here," he cried, "my letter acquainting you with Beatrice's illness must have reached you. I scarcely expected it would. But I was resolved to write, as I knew you would come if you could."

"You judged me rightly," said Walter. "Most fortunately, I obtained permission from the king himself to set out for France at once."

"Thank Heaven, she is better, so there was no need for haste," rejoined the colonel; "but at that time her state was very critical, and I scarcely expected she would recover. I hope and believe that this illness, which has so nearly proved fatal, will have one good effect, and induce her to relinquish her design of entering a convent."

"Does she still entertain the notion?" cried Walter.

"She did," replied the colonel; "but I think some change has recently taken place in her sentiments—at least, I understand so from Father Petre, for I have not yet seen her myself. The excitement of religious feeling, that had latterly taken possession of her mind, seems in a great

degree to have subsided, and I hope will disappear altogether."

"Heaven grant it may!" exclaimed Walter.

"As to her retirement to a convent," pursued the colonel, "no one, that I can learn, is in favour of the plan. The queen, who loves her as a sister, is strongly opposed to it, and even Madame de Maintenon and Madame de Maisonfort think the step would be injudicious. Now you have returned, you must do your best to win her back to the world."

"My previous efforts were unavailing," said Walter, in a desponding tone.

"Do not despair," rejoined Colonel Tyldesley. "You are far more likely to succeed now. But what news do you bring of our

friends? All is over, I fear, with the Jacobite cause."

"I fear so, too," replied Walter. "I have just parted with Sir John Fenwick in the Tower of London. But his case is not desperate. He can purchase a pardon if he will."

"Better die on the scaffold than do that," said the colonel. "He should have come with Sir George Barclay, who is now at Saint-Germain."

"Ay, that was a fatal mistake, which he must have bitterly regretted. Poor Charnock, who stayed with him, is now in Newgate, without a chance of escape. That last plot has proved most calamitous to us, and it is fortunate that you and Colonel Townley were not engaged in it."

"We might have been, had we not been absent," said Tyldesley.

"Some forty or fifty persons will be executed at Tyburn," pursued Walter.

"So many?" groaned the colonel.

"Ay; they are all in custody, and are sure to be convicted on the evidence of Porter Harris, Delarue, Bertram, Fisher, and Pendergrass."

"Give me a list of them," said the colonel.

"There are Sir John Friend and Sir William Perkins, both of whom you know; Sir George Maxwell, Sir Henry Bulkeley, Sir Bernard Howard, Major Lowick, Captains Stow, Walbank, James Courtney, Sherburn, Bruce, Dinant, Brigadier Rookwood, Chambers, Boyse, the three sons of Sir George Higgens, Captain Charnock,

Lieutenant King, and many others of no rank, whose names I do not remember."

"A frightful list!" exclaimed the colonel. "And all these you think will be executed?"

"I fear so."

"I trust this may be the last of these unlucky conspiracies," said Colonel Tyldesley. "All of them, except our Lancashire plot, have brought ruin upon their contrivers."

"Very true," remarked Walter. "And in this case the king seems determined to proceed with the greatest severity. In my opinion, none will be spared. Whether he has received any secret information I cannot say, but he believes that several important persons have been concerned in the plot, and has offered Sir John Fenwick his life if he will discover them."

"I trust he will refuse," observed the colonel.

"By so doing, he will only throw away a chance of safety," said Walter. "The information can be obtained from others."

"That may be, but Sir John Fenwick ought not to be an informer," said Colonel Tyldesley.

"Lady Mary is of your opinion, colonel," said Walter. "She will not allow Sir John to buy his pardon at that price."

"We live in most unhappy times," said the colonel. "It is a lamentable thing that the lives of so many brave gentlemen should be sacrificed. But we shall all suffer, if not in life, in estate. I fear my chance of returning to Myerscough Lodge is now more remote than ever. Indeed, I sometimes fancy I shall never again see the

old house, and the reflection gives me the greatest pain."

"Do not disturb yourself, colonel," said Walter. "You have only to wait. You are certain to get back in time."

"I do not complain," said Colonel Tyldesley. "I have everything I could desire—these royal apartments—the same 'service as his majesty—the same table—yet I sigh for my own house. I often wonder how it goes on."

"Have you not heard from Hornby, colonel?"

"I have heard from no one," he replied.

"Then no wonder you are anxious. Still, you may take comfort. You are no worse off than your friends, and are in the enjoyment of excellent health, which is a

great consideration. Depend upon it, you will live to get back to Myerscough."

"I hope I shall," rejoined the colonel, somewhat more cheerfully. "During your stay at Saint-Germain, you had better share my rooms. Luckily, I have a spare bed-room, which is entirely at your service, and this apartment, methinks, is large enough for both."

"I accept your offer with gratitude, colonel, and will gladly take up my quarters here. I must now present my-self to their majesties, who, as yet, are unaware of my arrival at the château."

X.

KING JAMES GIVES HIS CONSENT TO WALTER'S MARRIAGE WITH BEATRICE.

Both King James and the queen were rejoiced to see Walter, for they knew not what had become of him, and feared he might have been arrested. Her majesty almost immediately walked out on the terrace, in order to converse freely with him.

"I have a great many questions to ask you respecting the recent occurrences, but

I know your anxiety about Beatrice, and will try to relieve it. After your departure I spoke to Father Petre about her determination to enter the convent of Chaillot, and prayed him to dissuade her from her purpose. At first he refused, but subsequently yielded to my entreaties; and if he did not wholly succeed in his efforts, he at least prevented her from taking any immediate and irrevocable step. Father Petre found —as I myself had feared—that Beatrice was under the impression she should die early, and that, therefore, she ought to give up the world, whatever attractions it might have for her."

"I was quite aware that such was her idea, madame," said Walter, "and trust that Father Petre has been able to remove it."

"I think he has done so," replied the queen; "but this recent illness, from which she has scarcely recovered, seemed to warrant her apprehensions. However, the effect has been different from what we anticipated, for, though still suffering, she is far more cheerful than before. Your return has occurred at a fortunate juncture, and may help to complete the cure. It is also lucky that Colonel Tyldesley is here, as his influence with Beatrice is naturally greater than that of any other person."

"Except your majesty," said Walter. "I have already seen the colonel, and he has invited me to share his rooms with him, so I shall see him constantly."

"That is well," observed the queen. "The prospect looks better for you. I would our own future looked as well.

His majesty has been much cast down by recent events."

"I do not wonder at it, madame," said Walter.

"Still, I am surprised the failure of the scheme should have affected him so much," said the queen, "since I do not think he ever anticipated success. 'Heaven is against us!' he exclaimed, when the news reached him. As yet he has had no conversation on the subject with Sir George Barclay. He may talk to you, but I doubt it."

"I always felt the plot would be betrayed, madame," said Walter. "There were too many conspirators."

"Poor Sir John Fenwick!" ejaculated the queen. "I fear he is doomed. For

his wife's sake I would it were possible to save him."

"William of Orange, I think, is inclined to spare him."

"You are deceived!" cried the queen. "Fenwick is in the clutches of a tiger, who thirsts for his blood, and will have it!"

Walter made no remark, well knowing that Queen Mary of Modena detested William, and would recognise none of his good qualities. Fortunately, the young prince joined them at the time, and caused a change in the conversation.

Walter saw little of the king. Being in a very melancholy frame of mind, his majesty shunned the society of his Jacobite adherents, and spent such of his time as was not occupied in devotion, or in his

cabinet with his ministers, in solitary rides in the forest. Rarely did he now appear on the terrace, and always dined in private.

Each morning, Walter was in attendance upon the queen, and was always permitted to accompany her majesty on her promenades.

He had now been back at Saint-Germain nearly a week, but, as yet, had seen nothing of Beatrice, though he heard from the queen herself that she was so much better that she must speedily reappear. Colonel Tyldesley had been told the same thing, but was less impatient.

One morning, the two gentlemen, who had not yet gone forth, were summoned by a page to attend her majesty in the garden.

Walter was curious to ascertain the cause of this early summons, but could obtain no information from the page, and therefore prepared to obey the order.

As the morning was unusually beautiful, and the day promised to be warm, it did not seem surprising that the queen should prefer an hour when it was cool and pleasant, but Walter fondly persuaded himself that Beatrice was with her, and that it was on her account that the time was changed.

Nor was he wrong. When he and Colonel Tyldesley went forth, and looked upon the garden, they saw two ladies seated on a bench at no great distance, one of whom was evidently the queen, and the other, Beatrice. They appeared to be quite alone, since no attendants were visible.

If Walter's eyes did not deceive him, and he thought they did not, Beatrice had quite recovered, and looked as charming as ever. The slight delicacy in her appearance did not impair her beauty—perhaps it even heightened it.

The meeting was delightfully managed by the queen. As soon as Walter and the colonel were seen advancing along the walk towards the bench, her majesty bade Beatrice go and meet them, adding, "Come to me presently."

Thus sanctioned, Beatrice sprang forward, and, in another moment, was clasped to Walter's breast.

Oh, how many fears and misgivings were banished by that embrace!—how many hopes revived!

Colonel Tyldesley, who had been merely a spectator of this scene, and had not yet been able to address his fair cousin, now marched on to her majesty, who received him with a very gracious smile.

"I must pray you to conduct me to my attendants, colonel," she said, rising. "They are at the other side of the garden."

"Willingly, madame," he responded, bowing.

"I think you will now be satisfied that your cousin Beatrice has perfectly recovered?" she said, as they pursued their walk.

"I have not exchanged a single word with her, madame," he rejoined. "But I cannot doubt it. I never saw her look better."

"I am glad you think so," said the queen. "We must arrange for their speedy union. I take the greatest interest in Beatrice, as you well know, and nothing will please me more than to see her wedded to Captain Crosby. His majesty also takes great interest in them both—especially Walter, whom he regards as a son. He cannot do much for him, but he will do what he can."

"Walter is deeply sensible of his majesty's great kindness to him, madame," said the colonel. "But if my estates are not absolutely sequestered, he will not need to trespass on the king's bounty. Besides her father's property, which is considerable, Beatrice will have Myerscough Lodge, and all belonging to it."

"I have always heard your generosity praised, colonel, and not without reason," said the queen. "But his majesty means to do something for Walter—what, I cannot say. Perhaps he will give him a title, if Walter will have enough to maintain it."

"He will have enough, madame, provided I am not deprived of my estates," said the colonel.

"And an empty title would be useless," rejoined the queen. "I cannot make a promise for the king, but I desired to ascertain your sentiments."

Meanwhile, the others followed, but there was such a tumult in Walter's breast that for a few minutes he could scarcely speak.

"I ought to relieve your suspense, dear Walter," said Beatrice, "and tell you at

once that my last illness has wrought another change in me, which I think will be far more agreeable to you than my former state of mind. Then I had resolved to quit the world, and sacrifice all my earthly affections—foremost among which was my love for you. But I now view things in a different light, and am satisfied I can serve Heaven as well as if I shut myself up in a cloister. Had I yielded to my former impulses, I am convinced I should have repented when too late."

"I always felt certain it would be so," observed Walter. "But now you will not wonder that I should desire to take advantage of this fortunate change, and make you mine. Luckily Colonel Tyldesley is here; so the matter can be settled without delay."

"I shall not again oppose your wishes, dear Walter," she said. "But I cannot take this step without her majesty's consent."

"I feel sure it will not be refused," rejoined Walter.

"Perhaps she may wish me to postpone the marriage for a while, if she thinks I am likely to leave her," observed Beatrice.

"But you are not likely to leave her," said Walter. "You cannot return to Myerscough—at least for the present—and will be happier here than elsewhere."

"Are we exiled then from the dear old house, Walter?"

"Alas! it is so," he sighed.

"I grieve to hear it," she rejoined. Nothing would have pleased me so much

as to dwell there with you and the colonel; but that happiness is denied us."

"Only for a time," said Walter. "If these plots cease, after the disastrous failure of the last, the Government will deal more leniently with us, and the colonel may be pardoned. Meanwhile, we must make ourselves happy here, and I see no difficulty in doing so. Once upon a time you loved Saint-Germain."

"And I love it now," said Beatrice. "But my spirits are not so high as they were at the period you mention."

"You will speedily regain them," said Walter. "You forget you are still an invalid."

"Oh, no; I am quite well now, I assure you. A little languor is left, that is

all. But see, the queen turns; we must join her."

"And I have twenty things that I wanted to say to you," cried Walter.

"You must say them some other time," she rejoined, hurrying forward.

"Would you like to know what the colonel and myself have been talking about, Beatrice?" said the queen.

"Very much, your majesty," was the reply.

"We have been arranging a marriage, and we both agree it cannot take place too soon. What is your idea?"

"If everything is settled, I should be of the same opinion as your majesty," replied Beatrice, smiling.

"Everything is settled, I fancy," said

the queen. "Colonel Tyldesley has given his consent."

"Oh, if my cousin has been consulted, I suppose I must have something to do with it!" said Beatrice, affecting ignorance.

"You have a great deal to do with it," said the colonel. "You will have to play the part of bride, just as Walter will enact that of bridegroom."

"But I am chiefly anxious that the marriage should take place soon," said the queen.

"To insure that, your majesty has only to fix the day," said Walter. "Your commands will be obeyed."

"Nay, I cannot fix it now, though I would fain do so," said the queen. "I must first consult his majesty. But you

shall learn his pleasure speedily. Come to the king's private rooms to-morrow morning," she added to Walter. "I will be there. It is proper you should have his majesty's consent to your marriage."

Walter bowed.

Matters being thus far settled, the queen dismissed the two gentlemen, and returned with Beatrice to the palace.

Next morning, at an early hour, the queen sent for Walter, and took him to her royal husband's oratory, where they found his majesty alone.

Not being prepared for the visit, James was surprised, and not altogether pleased by the intrusion, but was perfectly satisfied by the explanation given him.

Addressing Walter, who knelt before him

while soliciting his consent to the marriage, he said, in a truly paternal tone:

"My son, you could not have chosen better. Beatrice Tyldesley is in every respect worthy of you, and there is no one to whom I would rather see you wedded. At one time I thought you would lose her, and though I felt deeply for your disappointment, I could not blame her, because I knew she was influenced by strong religious feelings. But Heaven has ordained it otherwise, and I rejoice. You have my entire consent to your marriage, and I give you and your chosen bride my blessing."

And he stretched his hands over Walter's head as he spoke.

"Sire, I thank you from my heart," said

the young man, kissing the king's hand as he arose.

"I will do what I can for you," said James; "but you must not expect much. However, I can obtain you a post under my royal brother Louis."

"I would rather remain at Saint-Germain for the present, sire," said Walter.

"I have ventured to intimate that your majesty would bestow a title upon him," said the queen.

"You have anticipated my design," replied James. "I will consider what will suit you best," he added, to Walter. "But all arrangements for the marriage must be deferred until my return from the Monastery of La Trappe, whither I go to-morrow on a visit to the Abbé de Rancé, a man of great sanctity. I shall not be absent more than

three or four days. You should go with me, but I do not like to separate you from your intended bride."

"By all means go," urged the queen. "I will answer for Beatrice."

"I cannot refuse your majesty's gracious offer," said Walter to the king. "I shall be delighted to accompany you."

"But you ought to understand that you are going to the strictest monastery in France," said James. "The severest discipline is never relaxed at La Trappe."

"Your majesty only makes me curious to behold the place," said Walter.

"And, however irksome your stay there may be, you must remain till I am prepared to depart."

"I will remain as long as your majesty desires."

"Good!" said James. "I shall travel there on horseback, and set out early to-morrow morning."

"At any hour your majesty may appoint, I shall be ready," said Walter.

"If all I have heard of the rigours of La Trappe be true," remarked the queen, "I never expect to behold your majesty again. You had better take some provisions with you."

"No," replied James. "I do not go there to feast, but to fast. You can do as you please," he added, to Walter.

"I shall follow your majesty's example," said the young man.

"I think I ought to say a few words to Beatrice before I start," said the king. "I will do so now, if your majesty will take me to her apartments."

"Come, then," said the queen; "we will all go there."

Quitting the oratory, they proceeded to another part of the palace, in which Beatrice's rooms were situated. Very charming rooms they were, and looked upon the garden.

Colonel Tyldesley was with her at the time, and they were both greatly surprised when the door opened and admitted the royal pair and Walter.

Due reverences having been made, the king, who had taken Beatrice's hand, held it in his own while he addressed her, regarding her, at the same time, with great kindness.

"You know my regard for you, dear Beatrice," he said. "Colonel Tyldesley himself can scarcely take greater interest

in you than I do! You will, therefore, feel sure that it must afford me the greatest satisfaction to find that your long engagement to Walter Crosby, whom I love as a son, is about to be ratified. I have come in person to tell you, instead of sending a message to that effect by her majesty."

"I thank your majesty from my heart!" replied Beatrice, scarcely able to speak from emotion.

"That the marriage will be happy I cannot doubt, for I am certain Walter loves you devotedly."

"Not better than I love him, sire!" said Beatrice.

"I am glad to hear you say so," rejoined the king. "If you maintain those senti-

ments, as much happiness as can fall to our lot in this sorrowful world awaits you."

"Perfect happiness, I hope, awaits them," said the queen.

"Nay, they must not look for that," rejoined James, gravely. "Perfect happiness is not to be obtained on earth. They who expect it will be disappointed."

"I feel that, sire," said Beatrice. "But, if my happiness is not complete, I shall have no regrets, which I might have had in a cloister."

"All life's brightest and best days are before you," said the queen. "Enjoy them while you can."

"To me the world appears a happy world," said Walter, who had listened with the deepest interest to what passed

between the king and Beatrice; "and never did it present so fair an aspect as at present. I was wretched enough a short time ago, but I can see nothing now before me but unalloyed happiness."

"You are of a sanguine temperament, and it is well," remarked the king. "I was born under a malignant planet, and am constitutionally melancholy. You bear your reverses well, colonel," he added to Tyldesley.

"I try to do so, sire, though I am sometimes downcast," was the reply; "but I feel confident all will come right in the end."

"I envy you your confidence," said James. "And now I have something to say to you, fair Beatrice, which I fear will not

be agreeable to you. To-morrow I am going to visit the Monastery of La Trappe, and mean to take Walter with me, if you have no objection. He will soon return."

"Do not consider me for a moment, sire," she cried. "I should wish him to attend your majesty."

"But the marriage will have to be deferred," said the queen.

"That is immaterial, madame," said Beatrice. "Since his majesty has expressed a wish, it must be obeyed. Besides, the marriage could not take place in the king's absence."

"I thank you much," said James, looking very well pleased; "and now, since all is satisfactorily arranged, I will bid you adieu, as I shall not, in all probability, see you again before my departure."

So saying, he raised her hand to his lips, and prepared to leave the room.

"I suppose your majesty can dispense with my further attendance?" said the queen.

"It is not worth your while to accompany me," rejoined James. "I am now going to meet Lord Melford in my cabinet, and shall be engaged with him for the next two or three hours. Come with me, Walter. I have some further directions to give you."

XI.

THE STORY OF THE COMTE ARMAND JEAN LE BOUTHILLIER DE RANCE AND THE BEAUTIFUL DUCHESS DE MONTBAZON.

All that the king had to say to Walter was to tell him that he might invite any two persons he chose to accompany him to the Monastery of La Trappe; but if they went, they must submit without a murmur to the strict rules of the order.

Walter thanked his majesty, and said he would consider the matter, and James dismissed him.

Subsequently, the lovers passed several pleasant hours in the garden; but they had not much opportunity for private converse, since the young prince, who walked out with them, would not leave them alone for a single moment. However, it was a delightful day, and made Walter amends for much that he had endured. When they separated, he took leave of her, as he should not see her again till his return.

In the evening, Sir George Barclay paid a visit to Colonel Tyldesley and Walter, and learning from the latter that he was about to accompany the king to the Monastery of La Trappe, he asked if he ever heard the history of the Abbé de Rancé.

"If not, I will tell it you," he said. "It is curious."

"I should much like to hear it," replied Walter.

And the colonel expressing a wish to the same effect, Sir George began his relation.

"Twenty years ago, the Compte Armand Jean le Bouthillier de Rancé was considered the handsomest man in Paris, and was certainly the gayest and most dissipated.

"A great gambler, he seldom lost at play, and had fought several duels, but was never wounded, though none of his adversaries fared so well. With the fair sex, as you will easily imagine, he was an immense favourite, but they complained of his inconstancy; and it was said of him, and I believe with truth, that he was never faithful save to one person.

"But the gay Armand de Rancé had

some good qualities that ought not to pass unmentioned. He was exceedingly good-natured and generous, and though an incomparable swordsman, always avoided a quarrel if he could. Besides, if he was invariably lucky at play, it could never be alleged against him that he played unfairly. Then he was said to be universally accomplished, and though this may be doubted, it is certain he spoke several languages fluently—I myself have conversed with him in English—danced to perfection, rode admirably, and was remarkably lively and witty.

"And this is the present Abbé of La Trappe?" demanded Walter.

"The person I am describing is Armand de Rancé," replied Sir George Barclay.

"But he is strangely altered now, as you will say when you behold him."

"You say that to one woman—and one only—he was reported to be constant!" remarked Walter. "Who was she?"

"The beautiful Duchess de Montbazon," replied Sir George. "I have seen her, and never beheld a more lovely creature. Eyes of the softest blue, tresses like gold, and a form worthy of Venus herself. Armand de Rancé fell madly in love with her, and his passion was requited. They seemed made for each other, and ought to have met sooner, before a barrier had been placed between them."

"Was the duke jealous?" asked Walter. "I thought the French *noblesse* rarely troubled themselves about their wives."

"The Duke de Montbazon was jealous, but did not care to make himself ridiculous by exhibiting his jealousy," replied Sir George. "On the contrary, though quite aware of the duchess's infidelity, he maintained an appearance of friendliness towards her lover.

At the time I speak of, the Duke resided in the Rue des Fossés, Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois. The duchess's apartments were in a different part of the mansion from those occupied by the duke, and were never invaded by him. A private door, of which Armand had the key, communicating with a secret staircase, enabled him to enter her rooms at all hours; and no danger being apprehended, no precautions were taken.

"Not for a single day since the affair

began had Armand failed to visit the duchess; but at length important business called him from Paris for a week. Almost tearing himself away, he left her looking inconsolable, but beautiful as ever.

"'Come to me again as soon as you can. I live only for you,' were her parting words to him.

"'I will come to you the very moment I return,' he replied.

"During his absence he received no letters from the duchess, and wrote none to her. But the ardour of his passion had, if possible, increased.

"On the evening of the seventh day after his departure, Armand returned to Paris, and without making any inquiries, flew to the abode of his mistress.

"Full of impatience, he unlocked the pri-

vate door, and mounted the narrow staircase leading to her rooms.

"When he reached the door an unaccountable terror seized him, and for a moment prevented him from proceeding further; but, shaking off the feeling, he entered the apartments, and was instantly struck by their strange appearance. No one was in the ante-chamber, no one in the adjoining room, which was only dimly lighted.

"The door of the duchess's own chamber was standing ajar, but he could see lights within it, and pushing open the door, he beheld a sight that transfixed him with horror.

"There, on a bed of death, with tapers burning beside her, lay the duchess, her

rigid features still retaining all the matchless beauty they had worn in life.

"After gazing at this terrible spectacle for a few minutes, he moved forward, pressed his lips to her marble brow, and fell senseless by her side.

"From that hour Armand de Rancé was an altered man, and sought to expiate the errors of his past life by the severest penance and self-mortification."

"I shall be curious to behold him," remarked Walter. "Have you aught more to relate concerning the beautiful Duchess de Montbazon, in whose fate I am much interested?"

"It was supposed she was poisoned by the duke, but this was never proved, and since De Rancé immediately withdrew

from the world, and shut himself up in a convent, no inquiry was ever made. The rigorous abbé of La Trappe is not associated with the man of pleasure of former days. Armand de Rancé, however, is not the only remarkable person in the monastery. Several well-known partisans of King James have retired there, and one in especial—Sir Thomas Stanley—has become a hermit, and occupies a cell within its precincts. It is not impossible that I myself may become a brother of the order."

"You!" exclaimed Walter, in surprise.

"Yes," replied Sir George. "I am deeply disappointed and wearied of the world."

"Take not that step hastily," said Colonel Tyldesley, in a monitory tone. "You are not fitted to become a monk—

especially of such a severe order. I have sometimes indulged the notion, but it has always passed away."

"Well, I shall hear what you think of the monastery on your return," said Sir George.

"Why not go with us, and judge for yourself?" rejoined Walter. "His majesty has authorised me to invite two persons, and you shall be one of them. Will you be the other?" he added, to Colonel Tyldesley.

Both readily assented.

"But mind, the king will take no provisions with him, and you are aware of the rigorous rules of the monastry."

Neither objected, and Sir George said he wished to see how fasting agreed with him.

On that afternoon a messenger had

taken a letter from King James, written with his own hand, to the Abbé de Rancé, informing the reverend father that he proposed to pay him a visit on the morrow, and should probably stay at the monastery with his attendants for two or three days.

XII.

THE MONASTERY OF LA TRAPPE.

Fine was the day on which King James set out for La Trappe.

His majesty had previously been informed by Walter that Sir George Barclay and Colonel Tyldesley would have the honour of attending him, and expressed his satisfaction at the arrangement. All the gentlemen were furnished with horses from the royal stables.

Besides these there were four grooms and a piqueur; but his majesty did not take with him either Father Scarisbrick or Father Petre.

The first part of the journey lay through the forest, and here the king rode by himself, and seemed occupied in meditation.

At Houdan, where they halted for half an hour, he exchanged a few words with his attendants, but looked more than usually grave.

On passing over the plain near the picturesque town of Dreux, with its castle-crowned hill, his majesty made some allusions to the sanguinary battle fought there in 1563 between the Romanists under the Duke de Guise, and the Huguenots under the Prince de Condé.

"The heretics were worsted then, sire," remarked Sir George Barclay.

"True," replied James; "but yonder castle was afterwards taken from Guise by Henri of Navarre."

His majesty then relapsed into silence, and conversed with no one till he arrived at Verneuil, where he halted for an hour, preparations having been made for him and his attendants at the inn, and a plentiful repast provided.

Of this his majesty did not partake, but his attendants ate very heartily, looking upon it as the last good meal they should enjoy for some time; and several of them who held fasting in abomination, carried off with them a secret supply of provisions and wine. While his retinue were thus

feasting, James, who strictly practised abstinence, was content with a morsel of bread and a glass of water.

On resuming their journey, they quitted the high road to Mortagne and Alençon, and crossed a lofty hill, from the summit of which they could discern the Monastery of La Trappe, a large, gloomy-looking pile situated in the midst of lakes and woods.

The valley in which this religious retreat was placed seemed cut off from the world, being entirely surrounded by mountains.

James, who had never seen the monastery before, halted to look at it, and seemed greatly struck by its secluded appearance.

All his attendants regarded the place

with interest, though most of them inwardly confessed that they should not care to dwell long within its walls.

Owing to the extreme beauty of the evening, the fabric was seen to the greatest advantage; but, despite the rosy tints upon its roof, it had a melancholy look.

The royal party did not reach their destination so soon as they anticipated, for they had to skirt the lakes, some of which lay between them and the monastery; but, at length James drew up before the arched entrance and alighted, while one of the grooms held his bridle.

At the same moment, a tall, thin monk, with noble, but wasted features, and a fringe of hair that was still dark, clothed in a white woollen cope and scapulary, and

having a cross pendent from his girdle, issued from the porch and threw himself at the King's feet.

James could not for a moment doubt that this was the Abbe de Rancé, since behind him came several others of the brethren, with head bowed humbly down, and hands crossed on the breast.

By this time Sir George Barclay, Colonel Tyldesley, and Walter Crosby had likewise dismounted, but remained, at a little distance from the king, while the grooms, who were still on horseback, completed the picture.

"Rise, reverend father!" cried James, raising the abbé. "I cannot allow you to continue in this posture for a moment. It is not for a saintly man like you to kneel

to a sinner such as I am, but for me to prostrate myself before you. Give me your blessing, I beseech you!"

So saying, he bent reverently, and the abbé stretched out his arms, and pronounced a solemn benediction.

The gentlemen in attendance on his majesty were much struck by this little incident, and Sir George Barclay observed, in an undertone, to the others:

"The abbé is not so much changed as I expected. I should have known him again."

"Never before have I beheld such a countenance in living man," said Colonel Tyldesley. "Only in pictures of saints have I seen the expression represented."

"You are right," remarked Walter.

"The abbé has a saintly look. It can be seen at a glance that he is a man of extraordinary piety."

Apologising to the king for walking before him, the abbé now led his royal visitor into the entrance hall, the floors of which were bare, and the seats of the plainest oak.

Here they waited till his majesty's attendants joined him, when the abbé conducted the party along a corridor to the chapel, where the brethren were already assembled.

Dimly lighted by a few tapers, the chapel was as plain and simple as the apartments they had just quitted, and no ornament of any kind could be observed save on the altar. On the floor were sedge mats.

An arm-chair of oak was assigned to the

king, but the others sat on a bench. The solemity of the service, and the gravity and pious deportment of the brethren, profoundly impressed James.

At the close of the service, when the brethren had dispersed, the king presented his attendants to the abbé, who received them with great kindness, and said to Sir George Barclay:

"Methinks I have seen you before, my son?"

"You are not mistaken, reverend father," replied Sir George. "We have met in former days. But I did not venture to remind you of the past."

"Alas, my son!" said the abbé, "penance and prayer may bring peace of mind, but cannot purchase forgetfulness. The

past constantly forces itself upon me. Let me have some converse with you ere you depart."

Aware that the king desired to have some discourse in private with him, the good abbé provided himself with a lamp, and conducted his majesty to a small room furnished with a table and a single chair.

Setting down the lamp on the table, the abbé offered the chair to the king, who, however, declined to sit down.

"Reverend father, I desire to unburthen my breast to you," he said. "I have sinned deeply—very deeply; but, though my contrition has been lasting and sincere—though I constantly perform severe acts of penance, and pass several hours of each day in prayer—I cannot obtain ease."

"Do not despair, sire," rejoined the abbé,

"Peace will come. I, myself, have been a great sinner — a very great sinner — and long feared that grace would be denied me; but my breast is tranquil now. From your exalted position, your majesty is exposed to constant temptations, to which I fear you sometimes yield. Hence the incurable remorse from which you suffer."

"You speak the truth, reverend father," said James. "It is so. Could I retire from the world, like the Emperor Charles V., I would come here, and then I feel confident I should obtain the serenity of mind I now vainly seek. But, alas! it cannot be."

"Open your heart fully, sire," said the abbé, "and I will give you ghostly counsel and absolution."

James complied, and kneeling down,

made a full confession, to which the abbé listened patiently, and after duly admonishing the penitent monarch, said to him:

"May Jesus Christ absolve thee from all thy sins, and place thee on His right hand in the midst of His elect."

As yet, neither the king nor his attendants had tasted food since their arrival at La Trappe, and they had been given to understand that another service, which they were expected to attend, would be performed in the chapel before supper was served.

To James, this was no hardship, and he was well pleased by the arrangement; but to his followers it was a very severe punishment—almost more than they could bear.

However, supper came at last.

Served in the refectory by the monks, it

consisted merely of roots, hard-boiled-eggs, bread, and vegetables, and was ill-calculated to appease the pangs of hunger.

The king sat next the abbé, and they conversed very cheerfully together; but Sir George Barclay, Colonel Tyldesley, and Walter had become quite exhausted from long fasting, and had scarcely power to talk. Nor could they be revived, since no other beverage but water was allowed.

Again prayers; after which they were conducted to their dormitories, and had to submit to a straw pallet.

Of the royal party, only the king himself attended the first morning service, which took place at half-past three; but the abbé and all the brethren assembled in the chapel, and amongst them James perceived the brave and once galliard Sir Thomas

Stanley, who had become a hermit, and dwelt in a hut built by himself amid the woods adjoining the monastery.

Sir Thomas was clothed in sackcloth, and his beard and hair were unclipped, but still the king recognised him.

Breakfast took place in the refectory at six o'clock, and the guests hoped that something substantial would be given them, but were again grievously disappointed.

Oatmeal pottage and milk, bread, but no butter, constituted the meal. Sir George Barclay thought he should have died when he beheld this simple fare, and Colonel Tyldesley and Walter could scarcely restrain the pangs of hunger.

The king showed to advantage beside his attendants, and uttered no murmur, but seemed perfectly content.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the grooms and other servants endured no privations, having brought provisions with them.

After breakfast the abbé had a long discourse in his private room with Sir George Barclay, and earnestly recommended him to join the community; but Sir George had by this time discovered that a life of fasting and prayer—to say nothing of penance—did not suit him, and declined.

"I admire your zeal and devotion, reverend father," he said, "but am unable to imitate it."

"Make the experiment, my son," urged the abbé. "You will soon overcome the first difficulties."

But Sir George shook his head. No

allusion to former days was made by either of them.

The abbé likewise conversed with Colonel Tyldesley and Walter, and seemed particularly pleased with the latter.

"My son," he said, in a kindly tone, "I am told by his majesty that you are about to wed the cousin of Colonel Tyldesley, a young lady of great beauty and goodness. I rejoice to hear it. May Heaven bless your union! May she you are about to marry be amiable as Rachel, wise as Rebecca, long-lived and faithful as Sara!"

"I thank you from my heart, reverend father," rejoined Walter, with a profound reverence. "I will convey your benediction to my destined bride, and am well assured she will feel as grateful for it as I do myself."

At the back of the monastery, near the garden, in which nothing but herbs and vegetables were grown, was an artificial terrace contrived between the lakes, commanding beautiful views of the surrounding hills.

As the weather was remarkably fine, the king went forth with the abbé, and walked to and fro on the terrace, greatly enjoying the prospect.

"The more I see of La Trappe," he observed, "the better I am pleased with it, and I still think it possible I may end my days here."

"You must pay us another visit, sire, before you decide," rejoined the abbé. "But the place does not always look so well as now."

"I like the brethren better than the

place," said James, "and am certain I could easily conform to the strict rules of the order."

"In that case, sire, you would undoubtedly be happy here—happier than you have ever been in your days of power and grandeur."

After walking for an hour on the terrace, and familiarising himself with the beautiful scenery, James expressed his intention of visiting the hermitage inhabited by Sir Thomas Stanley."

"Brother Nazaire we call him," said the abbé. "He is the strictest of the brethren, and undergoes severer penance than any other. Even I am surprised at what he endures. But he has completely overcome the flesh. Brother Nazaire's hermitage, though annexed to the monastery, is about

a mile off, in the thick of yonder woods. But as you will not easily find it, I will send a guide with you."

James thanked him, and summoning his attendants, set off in the direction pointed out, preceded by a monk, who acted as guide.

XIII.

THE HERMIT.

SKIRTING a lake, the king and his attendants soon reached the woods, which were very thick and intricate, and would certainly have lost their way without the guide.

The hermitage was little better than a shed, almost buried in the trees, and it was a wonder any one could be found to dwell within it.

Brother Nazaire was standing near his abode, with an axe in his hand, cutting wood.

Though surprised by the unexpected appearance of James and his attendants, he manifested no embarrassment, but prostrated himself before his majesty, who immediately raised him.

"I am surprised to find Sir Thomas Stanley here," said James.

"It is my last earthly abode, sire," replied the hermit. "Even your majesty's commands would not induce me to quit it. But I cannot ask you to enter my retreat."

"Nevertheless, I will look in," said James, who had to stoop, as he cast a glance through the open door.

A small straw pallet, a stool, and a

tub filled with water formed the sole furniture.

A crucifix was fastened against the boards, and beneath it was a scourge, the knotted lashes of which were dyed with blood.

"Is it possible you can dwell here, Sir Thomas?" asked the king, as he drew back, with a shudder.

"I do, sire," was the reply.

"Throughout the year?"

"Throughout the year—summer and winter—when the ground is parched, or the snow lies thick upon these trees. It makes no difference to me."

"I saw you at the chapel of the monastery this morning at half-past three. Do you attend that service regularly?"

"Regularly, sire," replied the recluse; "and I attend the last service at night."

"How many hours do you devote to sleep?"

"Two, sire—never more; and I do not always lie down on that pallet."

"And you never feel weariness?" asked Sir George Barclay.

"If I never felt weary in the service of the earthly master, who now stands before me, how can I do so in the service of a heavenly one?" replied the hermit.

"But you must be wearied of this solitude?" remarked Sir George.

"I am never alone," replied the recluse. "I hold converse with the saints. They aid, console, instruct me."

"You mean by their writings?" said James.

"True, sire," replied the recluse. "The path I have chosen, though thorny and difficult, leads to everlasting life, and I shall continue to follow it, however much I may suffer."

"Ay, you will die the death of the righteous, and arise with the just!" observed James.

"I trust so, sire," said the hermit. "And, in comparison with an eternity of bliss, what are a few days' suffering? Nothing!"

"I would I were as certain of salvation as you are!" observed James.

"Sire," replied the hermit, "you have laboured under difficulties from which I

have been fortunately exempt, and will be judged accordingly. Sins you may have committed—grievous sins—but it cannot be doubted that your repentance has been deep and sincere. Therefore, I say to you, have hope. Trust in the mercy of the Most High!"

"You give me inexpressible comfort!" said James.

"Listen to me, sire," continued the recluse, rising, as if inspired. "Listen also, ye others. To me, penitent as I am, this miserable hut seems brighter than the brightest palace. Earth's splendours grow dim before celestial glories. Were they offered me, I would reject them. I would rather be the humblest in heaven than the highest on earth. What are earth's gran-

deurs? What satisfaction do they afford? How fleeting are its joys! All end in the grave. Thus regarded, how does life appear? Merely a preparation for eternity. That thought, which is constantly before me, would enable me to bear ten times the suffering I now endure. I would rather be punished here than hereafter!"

"I owe you much, Sir Thomas," said the king. "Others have taught me how to live; you have taught me how to die. I hope to profit by the teaching."

"I cannot doubt it, sire," replied the recluse. "I have spoken more freely than I ought to your majesty; but it has been with a good intent."

"You have not said a word too much, Sir Thomas," rejoined the king. "You

have awakened feelings within me such as I never experienced before, and I trust I may be able to act up to them. Fare you well! You are on the high road to salvation."

"Farewell, sire! I trust we may meet again."

"I trust we may meet in heaven!" said the king.

He then signed to his attendants to follow him, and returned to the monastery.

During the walk he spoke not a word to any one; but repeatedly smote his breast, and muttered to himself:

"Would I were like that good man! Would I were like him, even though I were constantly girt in sackcloth, dwelt in that hut, and lay upon ashes!"

James remained at the monastery till the following morning, and took part in all the religious offices of the establishment, attending the last service in the chapel at night, and the first in the morning, at both of which he remarked the presence of the hermit, but had no further converse with him.

At his last private interview with the abbé, he left a sum of money with him to be distributed among the poor of the neighbourhood.

By this time the patience of the king's followers was completely exhausted, and they declared it would be utterly impossible for them to conform longer to practices of such extreme severity.

On his departure James took leave of the

Abbé de Rancé in the presence of a large assembly of the brotherhood.

Once more, the king threw himself at the feet of the abbé, and requested his blessing, which was bestowed with as much solemnity as on his majesty's arrival.

"Farewell, reverend father!" said the king. "This will not be my last visit to La Trappe. I have learnt here a great lesson that nowhere else could I have learnt so well."

When he had mounted his horse, he cast a valedictory look at the brethren, and rode off slowly with his attendants.

James kept his word. Not many months elapsed ere he again visited at La Trappe.

XIV.

HOW SIR JOHN FENWICK ATTEMPTED TO ESCAPE IN FEMALE ATTIRE FROM THE TOWER.

On the return of King James and his attendants to Saint-Germain, Colonel Tyldesley was surprised to find that during his absence a messenger had arrived, bringing a letter from Lady Mary Fenwick, in which her ladyship implored him to come to her at once, and bring Beatrice with him, as, in her opinion, they might be the means of saving her husband's life.

Though Lady Mary did not explain how this could be accomplished, she wrote in such moving terms that the warm-hearted colonel could not resist the appeal.

"What is to be done?" he cried, after reading the letter to Beatrice and Walter, who were standing near him at the time.

"We must both go, of course," replied Beatrice.

"But your marriage?" said the colonel.

"Oh, that must be postponed!" she replied.

"Postponed again!" cried Walter, in despair.

"Necessarily so," said Beatrice, "for I intend to accompany the colonel."

"Then I must go too!" said Walter.

"Of course you must," cried Beatrice. "You may be of great use."

"But what will their majesties say?" cried the colonel. "They will blame me."

"Not when you explain that you have been summoned by Lady Mary Fenwick," said Beatrice. "The queen is greatly attached to her ladyship, and I am sure his majesty will do his utmost to save Sir John's life."

And so it proved. Though the king's plans were completely disarranged by this sudden departure, he did not interdict it, but, on the contrary, encouraged it. Nor did the queen seek to dissuade Beatrice from accompanying the colonel, or Walter from accompanying Beatrice.

"I hope you will all come back soon," she said, "and bring Sir John and his devoted wife with you."

"I hope so, too, said James. "Every effort must be made to save Sir John Fenwick, for I am sure the Prince of Orange means to sacrifice him."

"Your majesty is right," observed Sir George Barclay, who was present at the time. "If not rescued, Sir John is doomed. I would hasten to his assistance, if I could be of any service. But I have just heard from Lady Mary, by the same messenger who brought her letter to Colonel Tyldesley, and she does not wish me to come."

Preparations for departure were very expeditiously made, and in less than an hour after Colonel Tyldesley and the others had taken leave of their majesties, they were travelling by post to Calais.

Thence they embarked for New Romney,

and having landed at that port in safety, immediately proceeded to London, and were received in the house in Saint James's-square, which Lady Mary still retained. She had only expected Colonel Tyldesley and Beatrice, but was rejoiced to behold Walter.

"I cannot sufficiently thank you all for coming to me in my distress," she said. "You will be perfectly safe in this house. It has recently been searched, and my servants can be relied on. Nor do I think, from the great caution you observed, that your arrival here will be suspected. To-morrow I will fully explain the plan I have contrived for Sir John's deliverance."

"Is he still confined in the Beauchamp Tower?" asked Walter.

"He is," replied Lady Mary, and quite as carefully watched as when you saw him there at first. But I visit him daily, and I think I shall be permitted to take you with me," she added to Beatrice.

"The presence of two ladies might afford an opportunity of escape," observed Colonel Tyldesley. "Sir John might pass out in female attire."

"I would not hesitate to take his place, if necessary," said Beatrice.

"Possibly, the goaler might be induced to assist," observed Walter.

"Even if the goaler could be secured, there are other difficulties to be encountered before Sir John could get out of the Tower," said Lady Mary. "However, no plan must be left untried."

Shortly afterwards, a slight supper, which had been hastily prepared, was served, and, having partaken of it, the visitors retired to rest, being much fatigued with their journey.

Next morning, they all met at breakfast, and it was decided that Beatrice should accompany Lady Mary on her visit to her husband, and then some idea could be formed as to the feasibility of the plan.

" Accordingly, her ladyship, who had not parted with her carriage, drove to the Tower in the afternoon, taking Beatrice with her.

They were detained for a short time at the Gate Tower, but the difficulty was set right by Major Wentworth, who accompanied them to the Beauchamp Tower, and

said very courteously that Lady Mary might bring her friend, Miss Tyldesley, with her at any time.

Being wholly unprepared for Beatrice's visit, Sir John was much surprised to see her enter his prison-chamber; but, as soon as the goaler had disappeared, Lady Mary explained that the young lady had just arrived from Saint-Germain with Colonel Tyldesley and Walter Crosby, who were now in the house in St. James's-square.

"We have come in the hope of accomplishing your deliverance, Sir John," remarked Beatrice. "Their majesties expect soon to see you at Saint-Germain."

"I hope I may present myself to them ere long," he replied, with a faint smile; "but I am not very sanguine. I have

thought the matter carefully over in every way, and do not think escape possible from the Tower."

"I am of a different opinion," said Beatrice. "I think it might be accomplished."

"Pray explain your plan?" he cried.

"Our plan is not yet fully arranged," said Lady Mary. "But you are to escape in female attire."

"And I am to be left in your place," said Beatrice.

"No; that must not be," cried Sir John. "If any one incurs that risk, it must be my wife."

"I have told her so," replied Lady Mary. "What we have now to consider is whether the plan is practicable."

"It appears to me to be so," said Beatrice. "A large riding-hood to conceal the features, an ample cloak, and a loose gown that can easily be slipped over the ordinary dress, are all that are required for the disguise."

"By Heaven! you are right," cried Sir John. "Thus disguised, I believe I might escape detection."

"Are you willing to make the attempt to-morrow?" said Lady Mary. "If so, I will come thus dressed, and you can depart in my stead with Beatrice."

"Not to-morrow," he cried. "Let me have a little time for reflection."

"You had much better decide at once," said Lady Mary.

"But I do not like to leave you here,"

he rejoined. "I know not what may happen."

"Think not of me!" she cried. "Think only of yourself. My life is not in danger."

"But will there be time to make all the necessary arrangements?" he asked.

"Plenty of time," she rejoined. "Beatrice and myself can prepare the disguise. That is the main thing."

"Once out of the Tower, you will have my cousin, Colonel Tyldesley, and Walter Crosby to help you," said Beatrice.

"Well, then, let it be so," said Sir John. "I consent. I will make the attempt to-morrow. But come late, and bring some money with you."

"The money shall be brought, but we

must not come too late, or we may be refused admittance."

Shortly afterwards, they left, having arranged to come again at five o'clock next day, Sir John declaring that he should then be fully prepared for flight.

The gaoler's manner was surly in the extreme to the two ladies as he let them out.

"I hope Sir John won't attempt to bribe that man," said Lady Mary. "I feel certain he would betray him."

"I am afraid he has overheard our conversation," said Beatrice.

"Rest easy; the door was shut," replied Lady Mary.

Anxiety kept Sir John awake that night, and the hours seemed to pass away very slowly.

His slight preparations were soon made, and then he could do nothing but pace to and fro within the chamber, and listen for the slightest sound.

At length the door was unlocked, and Lady Mary and Beatrice came in, and were received by Sir John with every manifestation of delight.

Beatrice was attired as she had been on the previous day, but Lady Mary wore the disguise agreed upon, which was so well arranged that it did not betray the dress underneath it.

As soon as the gaoler was gone, she retired with her husband into a small inner chamber, and when Sir John came forth shortly afterwards, a very extraordinary change had been effected in his appearance.

His figure was totally concealed by the cloak and gown, while the hood had only to be drawn a little more forward to hide the face completely.

Beatrice could not repress an exclamation of surprise and satisfaction. The transformation was more successful than she expected.

Unquestionably the present wearer of these articles of feminine attire looked taller than the lady who had just put them off, and stood by his side in her customary dress, but in other respects the difference was not very noticeable.

"Excellent!" she cried, scarcely able to refrain from clapping her hands,—"most excellent! You will certainly not be detected."

"I hope not," replied the tall lady; "but I am by no means free from misgiving."

"Nothing will go wrong," said Beatrice. "I will take you safely to the colonel and Walter, whom you will find at the end of Thames-street. They will have a boat ready for you."

"Yes, we judged it best to dismiss the carriage," said Lady Mary.

"You did right," rejoined Sir John. "Have you brought any money with you?"

"Yes; here is a bag containing a hundred pounds," she replied. "I ought to have given it you before."

"I will take charge of it," said Beatrice.

Sir John then bade farewell to his wife, who could scarcely support herself, and immediately retired into the inner room.

As soon as Lady Mary was gone, and Sir John had covered his face with the hood, Beatrice summoned the gaoler.

Thrusting in his head, Moody cast an inquisitive glance round the chamber, stared at the present wearer of the hood and cloak, but gave no sign of recognition, and then, without a word, descended the circular stone staircase.

Deliberately unfastening the door at the bottom of the steps, he allowed them to pass out, and Sir John was just congratulating himself on having got free, when Moody suddenly rushed forth, and seizing him by the arm, forcibly detained him.

Sir John did not venture to shake him off, being afraid he would call the guard.

"Ha!—ha!—ha!" chuckled Moody. "You thought you had escaped, eh? but

you are mistaken. Be pleased to return with me."

"Let me go, and you shall have a hundred pounds," said Sir John.

"I'll talk about nothing here," rejoined Moody. "Come back at once!"

Sir John made no further attempt to move him, but returned to his place of confinement; and Beatrice, of course, went with him.

Hearing them enter the prison-chamber, Lady Mary came forth from the inner room, and at once comprehended what had happened; but she made no remark, as the gaoler was still there.

"You said something just now, Sir John, about a hundred pounds," remarked Moody. "Give it me, and I'll consent to hush up this business."

"Give him the money," said Sir John to Beatrice.

"Here is the sum you demand," she said, handing the bag to the gaoler.

"I don't demand it," he replied; "but I am willing to accept the money, and think myself entitled to it. You have got off lightly, Sir John. Had I reported you to Major Wentworth, you would have been sent to Newgate. Don't make a second attempt, or it will go hard with you."

So saying, he went out.

"I am glad it is no worse," remarked Lady Mary to her husband. "I wouldn't discourage you, but I never expected you would escape."

"But I did," cried Beatrice; "and I am terribly disappointed. Never mind what the gaoler says. Let us try again."

"The anxiety is too great," replied Sir John. "Tell my friends, whom I shall not see, how much I am obliged to them; but they shall not run any further risk of this sort for me."

He then withdrew, and took off his disguise, which Lady Mary was obliged to resume. They stayed a little longer, and vainly endeavoured to cheer up Sir John, who seemed deeply depressed.

As Moody let them out, he said:

"I hope I shall see you to-morrow, ladies. No difference will be made."

"I trust not, after what you have received," rejoined Beatrice.

Meanwhile, Colonel Tyldesley and Walter remained at the appointed spot, in the vain expectation that Sir John would make his appearance.

At length they learnt what had happened, and, repressing their vexation as well as they could, took the ladies in the boat they had hired for Sir John, and returned to Saint James's-square, there to talk over fresh plans for Sir John's deliverance.

XV.

LADY FENWICK MAKES FRESH EFFORTS TO SAVE HER HUSBAND'S LIFE.

Lady Mary did not despair of saving her husband's life, and she resolved—if nothing else could be done—to buy off the witnesses Porter and Goodman, on whose evidence Sir John had been arrested and imprisoned.

Since two witnesses were required in a trial for high treason, if one of them could be removed, the prisoner's life would be out

of danger. In this notion she was encouraged by Walter, who undertook to find out Porter, and see what could be done with him.

Accordingly, he managed, through the medium of Baldwin, the landlord of the "King's Head," in Leadenhall Street, who was acquainted with Porter's address, to open a communication with him; but Porter refused the offers made him, and remained true to the Government.

Recourse was then had to Goodman, and it seemed likely that in this instance the result would be more satisfactory.

After some quest, Walter found him, and induced him to come in the evening to Lady Mary's house in St. James's-square.

Privately introduced by a confidential

servant, he was taken to a room in which he found Lady Mary herself, Beatrice, Colonel Tyldesley, and Walter. Lady Mary he had seen before, and Walter he knew. With the others he was not acquainted.

Lady Mary received him very courteously, and said, " I am quite aware, Mr. Goodman, that you are retained as a witness against my husband, Sir John Fenwick, and I am also aware that a considerable sum is paid you by the Government, but I trust we may come to an understanding by which you may serve Sir John, whom, in spite of appearances, I think you like, and at the same time better yourself."

"Your ladyship is quite right," said

Mr. Goodman, who was a very decent-looking man. "I would far rather serve Sir John than injure him, and if the matter can be arranged I shall be very glad."

"There is no doubt it can be arranged, Mr. Goodman," remarked Walter. "Lady Mary Fenwick desires to treat you very handsomely. Whatever sum you receive from the Government will be doubled; but you must quit this country, proceed to Saint-Germain, and remain there until these unfortunate matters have blown over."

"Does your ladyship desire me to depart for France at once?" demanded Goodman.

"At once, sir," replied Lady Mary. "I

know the danger of delay, as evidenced in the case of my unfortunate husband."

"You have just said, Captain Crosby," rejoined Goodman, addressing Walter, "that I shall receive double what is now paid me by the Government. In that case the allowance will be a hundred pounds a month."

"You shall have that amount, sir," said Lady Mary; "and it shall be paid you by Sir George Barclay, to whom instructions to that effect will be sent. For your immediate expenses you shall have two hundred pounds."

"Which I am now prepared to pay you," said Walter, producing the money.

"I unhesitatingly accept your ladyship's offer, said Mr. Goodman, "and think it

very handsome. I shall really be glad to go to Saint-Germain, and make my peace with King James, whom I have always preferred to the Prince of Orange."

"We may consider the affair concluded?" said Walter.

"Perfectly so."

"Then give him the money," said Lady Mary to Walter.

"I thank your ladyship very heartily," said Goodman. "At the same time, I honestly believe you have adopted the sole means of saving your husband's life. The Government, I know, are resolved to bring him in guilty of high treason, and you will thus baffle their designs. Since they will not be able to produce me, they must be defeated."

"We shall be glad if you can keep your departure for France a secret, sir," observed Walter.

"I will endeavour to do so," rejoined Goodman. "But I think it of primary importance to start, lest something unforeseen should occur to prevent me."

"Undoubtedly," said Lady Mary. "I wish you a safe and speedy journey. I shall feel much easier when I hear you have reached Saint-Germain."

"I will take care to communicate my arrival there to your ladyship," replied Goodman, as he quitted the room.

"I think your ladyship has acted most judiciously," observed Colonel Tyldesley. "You may now rest easy respecting Sir John."

"I hope so," she replied.

"I watched Mr. Goodman narrowly during the interview, and I do not distrust him," said Beatrice.

When informed of what had been done by Lady Mary, Sir John highly approved of it, and declared she had saved him.

Next day an unexpected visit was paid to Lady Fenwick by the Duchess of Norfolk. Lady Mary received her in the drawing-room, having only Beatrice with her.

A very stately personage, and very richly dressed, the duchess had a very haughty manner. She seemed rather to object to Beatrice's presence during the interview, but Lady Mary would not take the hint.

"I am extremely sorry for what has befallen Sir John," said the duchess; "but I think he may yet escape, and have come to tell you so."

"I am greatly indebted to your grace," said Lady Mary.

"The Earl of Monmouth, whom I saw yesterday, told me that, if Sir John Fenwick will persist in the charges he has brought against the Duke of Shrewsbury of corresponding with King James, he, Monmouth, will undertake to obtain Sir John's pardon from the king."

"I do not remember any charges brought by Sir John against the Duke of Shrewsbury," said Lady Mary. "Do you?" she added, appealing to the other.

"I remember none," replied Beatrice, decidedly.

"Here is a paper of directions given me by Lord Monmouth," said the duchess. "Perhaps you will hand it to Sir John?"

Lady Mary opened the paper, and after glancing at it for a moment, said:

"I will deliver it to Sir John. But it seems to me like a list of fresh charges to be brought against the Duke of Shrewsbury. Tell me, what you think of it?" she added, to Beatrice.

"It is exactly what your ladyship describes," said Beatrice, after glancing at the paper,—"a list of accusations to be brought by Sir John against the Duke—accusations that, if proved, are calculated to ruin his grace."

"Ah! indeed!" exclaimed Lady Fenwick. "I am aware that there is a deadly quarrel between the Earl of Monmouth and the Duke of Shrewsbury, but I did not think Monmouth base enough to take these means

to injure his adversary. Even to save his own life, Sir John Fenwick would be no party to such a scheme. I beg your grace to take back the instructions, which I scornfully decline in my husband's name."

"I think your ladyship will regret your impetuosity," said the duchess, rising.

"I do not think so," rejoined Lady Fenwick.

At a sign from her ladyship, Beatrice rang the bell, and a footman appeared.

"Order the Duchess of Norfolk's carriage," said Lady Fenwick.

"It is at the door, my lady," replied the man.

With a stately curtsey, the Duchess quitted the room.

XVI.

WALTER VISITS CAPTAIN CHARNOCK IN THE CONDEMNED CELL IN NEWGATE.

For the last month London had been turned into a sort of shambles by the frequent executions of Jacobite conspirators, whose mutilated limbs were exposed in all parts of the town, while their heads were stuck on spikes on the top of Temple Bar, presenting a most ghastly spectacle.

Between forty and fifty unfortunate gentlemen, convicted on the evidence of

common informers—for all respectable persons refused to bear witness against them —had been ignominiously put to death at Tyburn, embowelled, and quartered, in many instances before life was extinct, by the brutal hangman and his assistants.

Among those who thus suffered were Sir William Perkins and Sir John Friend, who were tried at the Old Bailey, before the Lord Chief Justice Treby, their request to die by the hands of the headsman on Tower Hill being harshly rejected. Major Robert Lowick, descended from an ancient Yorkshire family, and Brigadier Ambrose Rookwood, both of them strict Roman Catholics, likewise suffered at Tyburn, and prayed together on the scaffold. Avowing their crime, they endeavoured to justify King

James for the order he had given to assassinate William of Orange.

Captain Charnock had likewise been tried and found guilty, but the sentence had not yet been carried out; and as the popular indignation, satiated by so many executions, had began to subside, it was hoped that his life might be spared.

Walter had believed that his friend was gone; but no sooner did he learn that he was still living, than he determined to visit him in Newgate.

Heedless of the great risk he ran, he therefore went to the prison, and giving a feigned name and a guinea to the gaoler, succeeded in obtaining admittance to the condemned cell in which the gallant Charnock was confined. Had the visit been

delayed, Walter would never have seen his friend, since he was ordered for execution on the following day.

Considering the terrible circumstances in which he was placed, Charnock looked remarkably well. Though heavily ironed, he did not heed his chains, but got up instantly when Walter entered the cell with the gaoler.

"Here is Mr. Draycot come to see you, Captain Charnock," said the gaoler.

"So I find," replied the prisoner, instantly recognising his friend, and stretching out his hand; "and very glad I am to behold him."

"Well, I don't mind leaving you alone together, sir," said the gaoler, "since I'm satisfied you're not a Romish priest."

And he quitted the cell.

"How grieved I am to see you thus, dear Charnock!" said Walter.

"Ay, it's sad to die a felon's death," replied the other; "but so many better men have had to submit to the same indignity, that I cannot complain. Still, it is a paltry revenge on the part of William of Orange thus to degrade a gentleman. Have you just come back from Saint-Germain?"

"Only three days ago," replied Walter.

"Would I were there now!" cried Charnock. "Never again shall I behold our good and gracious king, in whose cause I shall die—or his fair queen, or the dear young prince—but my last breath shall be for them."

"I am afraid King James will never be

restored," said Walter. "Nor do I think he would now remount the throne. I have been with him recently to the Monastery of La Trappe, and am sure he has given up all thoughts of earthly grandeur."

"Would I could have ended my days at La Trappe!" sighed Charnock. "I knew Sir Thomas Stanley well, who is now there."

"Yes, I saw him. Is there aught I can do for you? I am not a priest, as the gaoler truly remarked, but I can have masses said for the repose of your soul, and will do so, if you desire it."

"I thank you much," replied Charnock. "The promise gives me great comfort. May your own life be long and happy!—if length of days means happiness, as I suppose it does. If Beatrice Tyldesley does

not hide her charms in a convent, may she still be yours!"

"Your good wishes are likely to be realised," said Walter. "Beatrice has consented to return to the world. She is now in London, and staying with Lady Fenwick."

"I am glad to hear that," said Charnock; "but I fear Sir John's fate is sealed."

"I hope not," rejoined Walter. "He seems unlucky. We have just made an attempt to deliver him from the Tower, but it failed."

"Fenwick's life can only be saved by some stratagem," said Charnock. "His trial has been postponed by the ministers in the hope that he will make some impor-

tant revelations; but these he cannot, or will not, do. If he is tried, he will be convicted; and if convicted, he will die the death of a traitor, as I shall, for the Prince of Orange will never pardon him."

"I much fear that what you say will come to pass, despite all his heroic wife's efforts to save him," replied Walter.

"Do not tell her what I have said!" cried Charnock. "I hope she may succeed, and would not discourage her; but I comprehend the difficulties she will have to encounter."

"Yes; they are almost insurmountable," said Walter.

Just then the door of the cell opened, and the gaoler came in.

"Your time is up, sir," he said.

"Even the gaoler was touched by the

parting that took place between the friends, and brushed an unaccustomed tear from his eyes.

After embracing Charnock, and bidding him an everlasting farewell, Walter quitted the cell.

XVII.

COLONEL TYLDESLEY RETURNS TO MYERSCOUGH LODGE.

Finding he could be of no use to Lady Fenwick or Sir John, and impelled by a feeling he could not resist, Colonel Tyldesley determined, at whatever risk, to return to Myerscough Lodge.

He did not desire to take Beatrice with him, feeling sure she would prefer remaining with Lady Mary, to whom she had now devoted herself; nor did he urge Walter,

who, he knew, would be unwilling to quit Beatrice. He therefore set out on the journey alone, proceeding on horseback, and by easy stages, towards his old mansion, of which he had now for some three months been deprived.

He did not anticipate much pleasure in revisiting the place to which he was so much attached under such circumstances; still, the sight of it would satisfy a craving of the heart.

He had assumed the dress of a North Country farmer, and thought that this disguise would insure him from recognition; but he found, as he came within a few miles of Myerscough, that several persons knew him.

All of them, however, said they would

rather die than betray him, and he had no reason to doubt their word.

From some of these he learnt that Hornby was still in charge of the old house, and that several of the servants were still there, and this intelligence was a great comfort to him.

The colonel was actually in sight of the mansion, which was now not much more than a mile off, when, on raising his head, he beheld Hornby.

The steward was advancing towards him on foot, being evidently on the way to Brock, when he thus encountered his master, whom he instantly recognised in spite of his disguise, and uttering a cry of delight, sprang forward, and embraced the colonel's knees.

"Moderate your transports, my dear

Hornby," said the colonel. "If you are seen, you will betray me. Nothing could be more fortunate than my meeting you in this manner. Can I enter the house safely?"

"Ay, that you can," replied Hornby. "It is indeed most lucky I was not away at the time of your arrival; but fear nothing! I will manage matters so that there shall be no discovery."

"I knew I could rely on you, Hornby," said the colonel. "But I was not sure I should find you here."

"I have never left the place, your honour," replied the steward. "From what you say, I am afraid my letters have never reached you."

"I have not heard from you for the last three months!" cried the colonel.

"Then there must have been some great treachery," replied Hornby. "I have written half a dozen letters to your honour, and wondered why I never received an answer."

"What did you write about?" inquired the colonel, in surprise.

"I wrote to tell your honour that things were not so bad as represented, and that you might return safely whenever you were inclined to do so."

"You delight me beyond measure by what you tell me, Hornby. Your letters must have been kept back to prevent my return."

"Ah, I see it now!" cried the steward. "But, to tell you the truth, colonel, I thought you felt happier in France than here."

"You did me an injustice, Hornby," rejoined the colonel. "I can never feel so happy as in my own house."

"Well, *we* shall be much happier now your honour has come back, that's certain," said Hornby. "And you'll find somebody you don't expect at the Lodge—somebody you'll be glad to see."

"You mean Father Johnson?"

"I do, your honour," replied Hornby.

"I have heard nothing of him since he contrived to escape from Newgate," said the colonel; "but I fancied he might be here."

"Yes; he came here after his escape, and has been carefully concealed ever since," said Hornby. "The good father's presence at the Lodge is known only to those who can be relied on."

"I shall be truly glad to see him again," rejoined the colonel.

Hornby walked by the side of his master till they got to the park gates, which the steward himself opened, as he would not call the gate-keeper, who took the colonel for a farmer.

Before he got to the house, Colonel Tyldesley dismounted, and bade Hornby take the horse to the stable, but to give no explanation at present.

He himself followed more leisurely, and halted on the drawbridge to survey the dear old house.

Nothing had happened during his absence that he could discern, and he scrutinised the place very carefully. But it looked more dull and melancholy than in former times.

Till this moment he had not understood the strength of his attachment to the house, and he now felt if he were absolutely banished from it, he should die.

He had persuaded himself he was content at Saint-Germain, but there was always a void in his breast, and he now found that here, alone, at Myerscough, could the void be filled.

While still contemplating the old house with the tenderest regard, the door opened, and Father Johnson, who must evidently have seen him from an upper window, and hastened towards him, came forth.

It was a joyful meeting, as may well be supposed, but they did not deem it prudent to remain long on the bridge.

Entering the house, they proceeded at once to the chapel, where the devout colo-

nel knelt down, and returned heartfelt thanks for the mercies vouchsafed him, after which he listened to a prayer from the good priest, and received his blessing.

This duty fulfilled, the colonel sought his dressing-room, and, taking off his disguise, resumed his ordinary attire.

As yet he had seen none of the household except Hornby; but as he descended to the hall he met several of the servants, all of whom expressed the greatest delight at beholding their master again, assuring him, at the same time, that every precaution should be taken to keep his return secret.

Having gratified himself by looking over the house, he retired to the library with Father Johnson, and the priest explained

to him how he managed to escape from Newgate.

"As my presence at the meeting at the 'King's Head,' in Leadenhall-street, had been proved by three witnesses—Porter, Pendergrass, and Delarue—I was condemned, and should certainly have been executed as a traitor, had not one of the gaolers, secretly a Roman Catholic, delivered me at great risk to himself. A friend of his own came to Newgate one evening, wrapped in a great-coat, which he left with the gaoler. This great-coat, and a fur cap, which I found in the pocket, enabled me, with the friendly gaoler's aid, to get out of prison next day. I ought to mention that, previously to the attempt being made, my irons had been sawn

through with a file, furnished me by the same good friend. I remained in London for two days, and then set off here, knowing I should be safe, if I could only reach Myerscough."

"You have been singularly fortunate," said the colonel. "I wish poor Charnock had been equally so. He has just been executed at Tyburn, and died like a hero!"

"I knew he would," replied Father Johnson. "There is little chance, I fear, for Sir John Fenwick. He destroyed himself by that injudicious letter to his wife, which I felt almost sure would fall into the hands of the Earl of Shewsbury."

"Lady Mary is making every effort to save her husband," said the colonel. "Beatrice and Walter Crosby are with her."

"I thought they were at Saint-Germain," said the priest, "and hoped their oft-delayed union might soon take place."

"It seems just as far off as ever," said the colonel. "I fear nothing will now be done till poor Sir John's fate is decided. They hope to carry him back to Saint-Germain. But I have little expectation of such a result."

"Heaven prosper their efforts!" exclaimed the priest.

The remainder of the day was passed in perfect privacy by Colonel Tyldesley and the priest, but when it grew dusk they walked together in the garden, and at a later hour attended prayers in the chapel.

Next morning at a very early hour, the colonel sallied forth into the park, but re-

turned to matins, at which the household assisted, and it was noticed that he was much stricter in regard to his devotions than he had formerly been, and graver in manner.

After breakfast, attended by Father Johnson and Hornby, he thoroughly examined the interior of the house, and lingered over many objects, as if looking at them for the last time. Hornby afterwards remembered this circumstance.

On returning to the library with the priest, the colonel unlocked a small chest, and took from it a document, which he showed to Father Johnson.

"It is my will," he said. "I wish you to see it, in case anything should happen to me. You will find I have left Myerscough

and the whole of my estates to my dear cousin, Beatrice, and have appointed Colonel Townley and Mr. Standish my executors."

"So I perceive," replied the priest, after glancing at the document. "You informed me of your intention, but I was not aware you had carried it out. In my opinion, you could not have done better."

"I trust Beatrice may not be deprived of it," said the colonel, as he replaced the instrument in the chest.

Several days passed in much the same manner.

The colonel spent most of his time in devotional exercises, or in religious converse with the good father, walking out with him in the garden or the park, but

never going beyond the limits of his own domain.

Evidently his visit to La Trappe had produced a strong effect upon him; but though his life had almost become that of a recluse, he told Father Johnson he had never been happier, and only hoped he might be permitted to spend the remainder of his days in the same tranquil manner.

XVIII.

DEATH OF COLONEL TYLDESLEY.

Rather more than a week had elapsed since the colonel's return to the Lodge, and he and the priest were still seated at table, after breakfast, conversing together, when Hornby rushed into the room in a state of considerable excitement, to say that Captain Crosby had just arrived; and in another minute Walter himself made his appearance, the state of his apparel prov-

ing that he had ridden far, while his looks convinced them that he did not bring good news.

Both instantly arose to salute him, and Hornby lingered to hear what he had to say.

"You seem to have had a long journey?" cried the colonel.

"I am just arrived from London, and have lost no time on the road," replied Walter. "I am come to warn you."

"To warn me of what?" cried the colonel, a sharp pang striking his heart. "Am I not allowed to remain in peace here?"

"You are in the greatest danger," replied Walter. "I have come to tell you so. It has just become known to the Earl

of Shrewsbury that you have returned to your old abode without leave, and he has sent Captain Bridges and his dragoons to arrest you and take you to Lancaster Castle. But I have beaten them on the journey. You have plenty of time for flight."

"But I shall not fly," rejoined the colonel, in a determined tone. "I have vowed never to leave Myerscough again, and will keep my word. I shall resist."

"You have no chance," said Walter. "Bridges has got his whole troop with him."

"No matter," cried the colonel. "I shall offer all the resistance in my power."

"Then I had better go and prepare," cried Hornby, quitting the room.

"I learnt this alarming intelligence in London three days ago," said Walter; "and after convincing myself it was correct, set off to warn you."

"I thank you for what you have done," said the colonel; "but I repeat, I will not fly!"

"Then you must submit," said Walter, sadly.

"No, I won't submit! I will rather die than be taken hence."

"Now I understand your determination. But pray do not carry it out. Fly while there is yet time."

"You urge me in vain," said the colonel. "But before making my last preparations, I have something to entrust to you. You know whom it concerns."

And, as he spoke, he unlocked the chest, and, taking out the will, gave it to him.

Walter placed the instrument in his breast.

"Should it be necessary, I will deliver it to her," he said.

They then went forth, and found that the drawbridge had already been raised, and three men, armed with muskets and pistols, placed behind it, so as to be completely screened by the woodwork.

Hornby was in the court-yard, making such further defensive preparations as circumstances permitted.

Unfortunately, the household, being greatly diminished, he could not muster half so many as formerly; but the few left, all of whom were provided with mus-

kets, swore to stand by the colonel to the last.

Hornby was now supplying the men with ammunition, while Walter posted them as advantageously as he could; and the colonel, finding all going on satisfactorily, returned to the house with Father Johnson, and proceeded to the chapel, where he knelt down and prayed fervently, and fully believing his end not far off, confessed, and received absolution from the priest.

"Whatever may happen," he exclaimed, as he arose, "I am now prepared."

He tarried a few minutes to converse with Father Johnson, and, by his earnest entreaties, prevailed upon him to remain in-doors, and not risk his life in the defence of the house.

"Should things go badly," he said, "you

can cross the moat, and make good your escape. You will find a boat concealed among the bushes on the further side of the garden."

The good father thanked him for the information, and they then took an affectionate leave of each other.

On going forth, the colonel found Walter and Hornby stationed near the drawbridge, both of them armed with muskets, and said to the former:

"Give me your gun. If you use it, you will forfeit the pardon you have received from the Prince of Orange. Retire into the house. You can render me no service here."

Very reluctantly, Walter complied, and joined the priest in the entrance-hall.

Shortly afterwards, the trampling of

horse proclaimed the arrival of Bridges and his men; and in another minute the stalwart dragoons, in their helmets and polished breastplates, with their leader at their head, could be seen approaching the bridge.

As the whole troop was present, it made a very formidable show.

Instantly recognising Colonel Tyldesley as he stood there, Captain Bridges summoned him to surrender.

"I could not have believed you would have the folly and audacity to return to Myerscough, colonel," he said, "in open defiance of the Government. But since you have chosen to act thus imprudently, I am sent to apprehend you, and take you to Lancaster Castle."

"I don't think it likely you will accomplish your purpose," rejoined the colonel.

"Surely you are not mad enough to resist?" cried Bridges.

"You will never take me hence, with all your force," exclaimed Colonel Tyldesley.

"We shall see that," rejoined Bridges, laughing derisively.

"Perchance this may stop you?" cried one of the men behind the drawbridge.

With the words, a shot was fired, and Bridges fell from his horse, the bullet having lodged in his brain.

For a moment the troopers were staggered by the death of their leader, but they quickly recovered, and replied by a volley.

Hornby, and those screened by the bridge, escaped; but Colonel Tyldesley fell mortally wounded.

On hearing the discharge of firearms, Walter rushed out of the house, and seeing the colonel lying on the ground, with the assistance of Hornby, carried him into the hall, and laid him down on the floor.

Several shots were fired at them while engaged in this office, but neither of them was hurt.

Though almost *in extremis* when brought into the house, Colonel Tyldesley recognised the priest who knelt beside him, and recited the prayer for the dying, while holding a crucifix to his lips. A slight pressure of the hand showed Walter that his friend knew him at the last.

Another moment, and all was over with

one of the best of Lancashire's many loyal gentlemen.

Walter and the priest were still gazing upon the noble countenance of the departed —unaltered in death—when Hornby came up.

"Pardon me, Captain Crosby," said the somewhile steward. "And you, too, reverend father. But you must not remain here. No further harm can befall my loved and honoured master, but if you are caught by those savage dragoons in their present furious mood, no mercy will be shown you. Come with me, and I will get you across the moat unobserved. I have already sent over half a dozen horses, so that you can go where you please, and I trust you will allow me to attend you."

With this, he hurried them to a part of the moat that adjoined the garden.

Here they found a flat-bottomed boat, that had already served to convey the whole of the household, male and female, to the further side, together with the horses mentioned by Hornby.

In another minute Walter and the priest had likewise crossed, and were galloping towards Preston, attended by Hornby and a couple of grooms.

Aware that the terrible circumstances that had just occurred at Myerscough Lodge would cause a tremendous sensation when they became known, the little party rode on as far as they could, and then, hiring fresh horses, continued their course throughout the night, fortunately without meeting

with any interruption. Eventually they got safely to London.

Meanwhile, the Dutch dragoons, having succeeded in getting into the Lodge, and finding no one on whom they could wreak their vengeance, entirely plundered the place, carrying off every valuable.

The body of the brave gentleman, which was found lying in the hall by the dragoons, was carried to the chapel, where it was subsequently buried.

No name was inscribed on the stone—merely the simple words,

Eternal Rest.

XIX.

HOW WALTER CONVEYED THE NEWS OF COLONEL TYLDESLEY'S DEATH TO BEATRICE.

On the evening of his arrival in London, after escaping from the Dutch dragoons, Walter proceeded with Father Johnson to Lady Fenwick's house in Saint James's-square, where they saw her ladyship and Beatrice, both of whom were deeply affected by the details given them of Colonel Tyldesley's death.

"Take comfort, dear daughter," said the

priest to Beatrice; "your good cousin, the colonel, was fully prepared for his end, and I doubt not will now reap the reward of a well-spent life. Shortly before he went forth, as it proved, to perish in the defence of his house, he spoke to me of you, and in the most affectionate terms, hoping you might not be deprived of Myerscough. 'I have done all I can to secure the place to her,' he said, 'and I trust she may one day become its mistress.' I need not add that I pray fervently his last wishes may ere long be fulfilled."

"The good colonel expressed like sentiments to me," said Walter. "And he also confided to me his will, which I now deliver to you. By it he leaves you all his possessions."

"He has ever been to me as a brother,"

said Beatrice, scarcely able to control her emotion.

"He has indeed acted most nobly towards you," said Lady Mary. "I echo your prayer, reverend father," she added to the priest, "and trust his last wishes may be fulfilled."

"Do not remain longer in London on my account, Captain Crosby," said Lady Mary. "You have already done too much for me and my unfortunate husband."

"Since you think I can be of no further service, I shall set out at once for Saint-Germain," replied Walter.

"I ought not, perhaps, to ask you, reverend father," said Lady Mary to the priest; "but I should like you to stay with me, and your presence, I am sure, would be

a great consolation to Beatrice at this sad juncture."

"It would indeed," said Beatrice, casting an imploring look at him.

"Then I will remain at any hazard," replied the priest.

"As Hornby could no longer remain at Myerscough, I have brought him with me," said Walter. "I will leave him with you if you wish it."

"No; I shall not require his services," replied Beatrice. "But if he is here, I should much like to see him."

"He is without," replied Walter. "With your ladyship's permission, I will call him."

Hornby was, therefore, brought in.

Lady Mary remembered him well, having seen him often before on her visits to Myers-

cough, and she therefore greeted him very kindly; but it was Beatrice to whom the faithful fellow chiefly addressed himself.

She had risen when he entered the room, and offered him her hand, which he pressed most respectfully to his lips.

"I have lost my dear and honoured master," he said, in broken accents, "whom I have served since I was a boy; but you are now my mistress, and I will serve you equally well. I would you could go back to Myerscough at once; but we must bide our time."

"If ever Myerscough is really mine, Hornby," replied Beatrice, "you shall live there in the same capacity as before—that I promise you."

"Meantime, you must go with me to France," interposed Walter.

"To France?" exclaimed the other, surprised.

"Yes; to Saint-Germain, where you will see King James and his queen, with the Prince of Wales."

Seeing the former steward look inquiringly at her, his new mistress said, "I shall follow soon. For the present I must stay with Lady Mary Fenwick."

"When do you start for Saint-Germain, Walter?" asked Beatrice.

"To-night," he replied.

"So soon?"

"Yes; I have nothing to detain me, and am in danger here. I shall embark at Seaford. I dare not proceed by New Romney since Sir John's arrest!"

"I think you might have remained till to-morrow," said Lady Mary. "But you

can judge best. If Sir John had not delayed, he would not be now in the Tower."

In less than half an hour after quitting Saint James's-square, he had hired a post-chaise, and was travelling towards Seaford, attended by Hornby.

Before two o'clock in the morning, he had embarked in a small vessel for Dieppe, where he arrived by noon next day, and reached Saint-Germain the same evening.

XX.

HOW SIR WALTER TYLDESLEY WAS MARRIED TO BEATRICE IN THE CHAPEL OF SAINT-GERMAIN IN THE PRESENCE OF THE KING AND QUEEN.

SHORTLY after his return to Saint-Germain, Walter Crosby, by the king's desire, assumed the name of Tyldesley, and was created a baronet—James thus making it manifest to the whole Court, as well as to the French Court, that he took a strong personal interest in the young man.

As will be supposed, the step was prelimi-

nary to Sir Walter's union with Beatrice, their majesties having resolved that the marriage should take place at Saint-Germain without delay.

Sir Walter would fain have proceeded to London to bring over his intended bride, but this the queen would not permit, as she considered the risk too great after the recent occurrences at Myerscough. Beatrice had Father Johnson to take charge of her, and it would be quite sufficient if Sir Walter met her at Dieppe.

These matters being arranged, the queen wrote a letter with her own hand to Beatrice, saying she expected her immediately, as her marriage with the newly-created Sir Walter Tyldesley was fixed for an early day.

This letter, which, though couched in the most gracious terms, almost amounted to a command, was confided to Hornby, who was to be accompanied by a special messenger.

Another letter, from Sir Walter himself, explaining that he had assumed the name of Tyldesley by command of his majesty, was sent at the same time, and by the same messenger.

It will not be doubted that the summonses should be promptly complied with.

Though most reluctant to part with her friend, Lady Mary Fenwick felt she could no longer detain her, and bade her adieu with heartfelt wishes for her happiness.

Accompanied by Father Johnson, by the faithful Hornby, who was delighted to be

employed on the mission, by the messenger, and a female servant, Beatrice arrived safely at Dieppe, where she was received on landing by Sir Walter Tyldesley.

As soon as they could escape from the general gaze, the betrothed lovers rushed into each other's arms; and as Sir Walter strained Beatrice to his breast, he felt that his troubles were over, and happier days had come.

A great surprise was in store for the future Lady Tyldesley, for which Sir Walter was prepared, but which she herself had not in the slightest degree expected.

At Rouen she was met by the queen and the Prince of Wales in an open carriage, drawn by four horses, and attended by outriders.

To this carriage she was immediately

transferred by Sir Walter, and received in the most affectionate manner by her majesty and the young prince.

Again, on arriving at the château of Saint-Germain, she was most warmly welcomed by King James in person, his majesty's usually cold deportment being entirely changed on the occasion.

Next day, on hearing of Beatrice's return and approaching marriage, Madame de Maintenon drove over from Versailles to offer her congratulations.

"You have chosen well," said the great lady. "You are clearly better fitted for married life than for that of a convent."

On the third day after her return, Beatrice and Sir Walter Tyldesley were united.

The ceremony, which was performed by

Father Johnson, assisted by Fathers Petre and Scarisbrick—the former being the king's confessor, and the latter his chaplain and preacher—in the presence of their majesties and the Prince of Wales, the king's two ministers, Lord Melfort and Lord Middleton, the Duke of Berwick, the Earl of Aylesbury, the Lords Montgomery, Ross, Peterborough, Brudenel, and Castlemaine, Sir George Barclay, and other persons of importance, together with all the ladies of rank then staying at Saint-Germain.

The latter made a very brilliant show, many of them possessing great personal charms, and all being very richly attired; but none of them could compare for a moment with the lovely bride.

At the close of the ceremony, her ma-

jesty embraced the beautiful Lady Tyldesley, and threw a splendid gold chain round her neck.

Sir Walter and Lady Tyldesley remained at Saint-Germain in the continued enjoyment of royal favour till 1699, when, their property being restored, they were enabled to return to Myerscough after their long exile.

Needless to say they took with them the faithful Hornby, who resumed his former post.

Their first business was to erect within the chapel a suitable monument to the memory of the good Colonel Tyldesley.

XXI.

THE BILL OF ATTAINDER.

OUR tale approaches its close, and only the death of the ill-fated Sir John Fenwick has to be recorded.

Owing to the disappearance of Goodman, as related, when the last orders were given for the trial there were not two witnesses against Sir John, as required in cases of high treason; and the prisoner must consequently have been acquitted, if a Bill of

Attainder had not been brought against him, which, after a violent opposition in both Houses, passed only by a very small majority in the House of Lords, and subsequently received the royal assent.

Such strenuous application was made to King William by Lady Mary, that his majesty, touched by compassion, seemed disposed to pardon her husband, when the Earl of Shrewsbury said to him:

"Sire, Lady Fenwick is doubtless to be pitied, but if this conspiracy had succeeded, England would have been infinitely more to be pitied. Not only would the country have shed tears like her ladyship, but streams of blood would have flowed from the slaughter of its best citizens."

This consideration checked the king's disposition to mercy, and the sole grace he

accorded Sir John was the privilege of being beheaded on Tower Hill.

In his last interview with his devoted wife, which occurred in the Beauchamp Tower, on the morning of his execution, while straining her to his breast, Sir John said:

"Farewell, my best beloved. I die perfectly reconciled to my fate. I die happy, save only that I must part with thee. May my blood rest on the heads of my enemies who have brought me to this pass! I might have expected more gratitude from the Prince of Orange, whom I spared when I had him in my power."

Shortly afterwards Major Wentworth entered the prison chamber, and though he said nothing, Sir John perfectly understood

from his manner that the Deputy-Lieutenant was come to convey him to the place of execution.

Embracing his wife for the last time, and leaving her half-fainting in the care of a female attendant, Sir John said:

"I am ready, major."

On coming forth, Sir John found half a dozen halberdiers standing at the door of the Beauchamp Tower, together with a coach, into which he was assisted by the Deputy-Lieutenant, who immediately followed him.

More warders, armed with halberts, joined them at the Gate Tower, and at the Bulwark Gate they were met by one of the sheriffs in a carriage, guarded by javelin men.

Reared on its customary site on the

summit of Tower Hill, the scaffold was surrounded by a party of royal horse guards, though there seemed no necessity for so much caution, since the assemblage, which was not very large, was perfectly quiet.

As Sir John mounted the fatal steps, he slightly started on beholding the block and the masked executioner standing near it, with the axe upon his shoulder. A shudder passed through his frame, but he instantly recovered, and saluted the man.

At the same moment, a sudden and deep silence pervaded the throng, and the sheriff told Sir John if he had any observations to make to them, he could do so now.

Availing himself of the permission, Sir John advanced to the railing of the scaffold, and his noble appearance as he stood

there bareheaded excited a murmur of admiration, mingled with expressions of sympathy.

"My loyalty is untainted," he said, in a firm voice, "and I have always striven to support the Crown of England, in the true and lineal course of descent without interruption."

Here some slight murmurs of disapproval arose, but Sir John being rather stimulated than checked by them, went on.

"I return my most hearty thanks to those noble and worthy persons who gave me their assistance by opposing the unjust Bill of Attainder, without which it would have been impossible I could have fallen under the sentence of death.

"I pray God to bless my true and law-

ful sovereign, King James, and restore him and his posterity to this throne again, for the peace and prosperity of the nation, which cannot possibly prosper till the Government is settled on a right footing."

Here the sheriff took hold of his arm, and told him he could not possibly be allowed to proceed in that strain.

"I have done," rejoined Sir John.

Falling on his knees, he raised his hands, and exclaimed:

"And now, O Lord, with all humble devotion, I commend my soul into Thy hands, beseeching Thee that it may be always precious in Thy sight, through the merits of our Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Gently declining the services of the chap-

lain, who now advanced towards him, he remained for a few minutes in silent prayer.

Arising, and baring his neck, he again knelt down beside the block.

There was no delay.

The handsome head was stricken off by the sharp axe, and held up by the executioner to the horrified assemblage, who found relief in a groan.

THE END.

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